This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

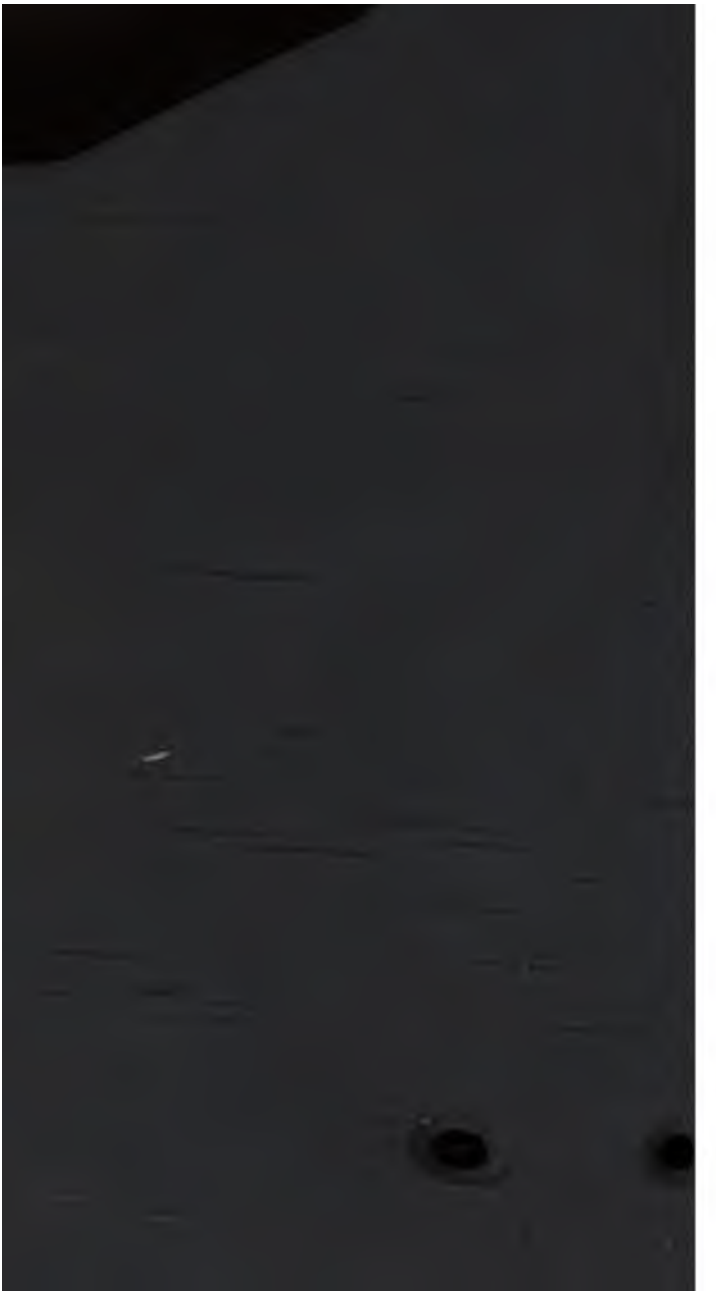
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



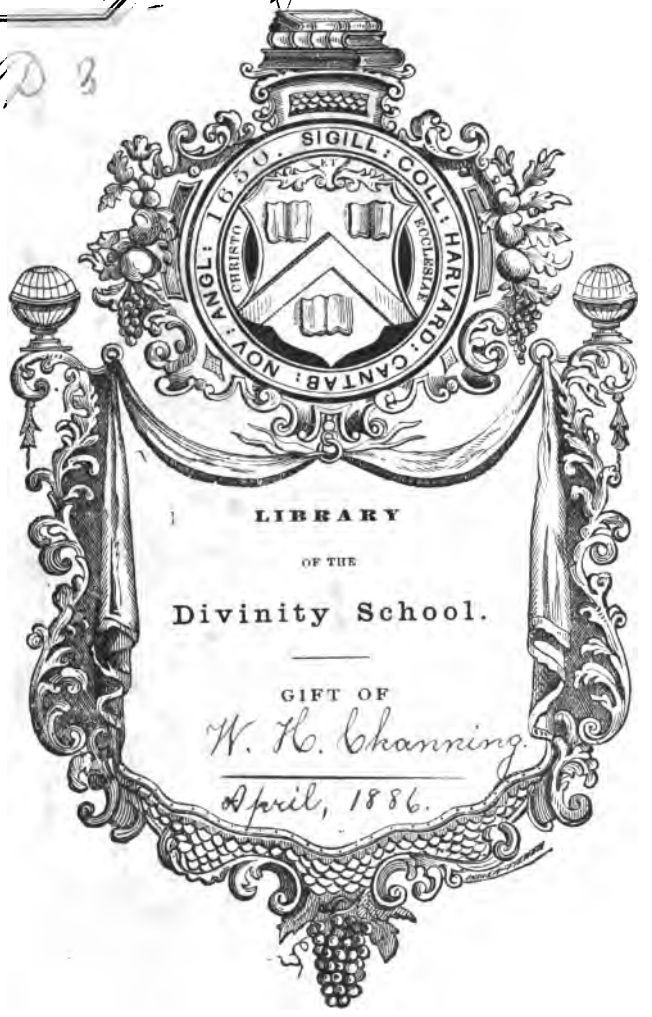
C
Brooke J. G.

MEMOIR

OF

J. G. BROOKS

Biog C
1000
Brooks J. G.
D 3



LIBRARY

OF THE

Divinity School.

GIFT OF

W. H. Channing.

April, 1886.

The Rev. W. H. Channing
with most respects from
Brooke Smith

Aug. 26. 1855
Birmingham

C
Brooke, J. G.

MEMOIR

OF

J. G. BROOKS

"AS POOR, YET MAKING MANY RICH."

MEMOIR

OF

JOHN GENT BROOKS;

MINISTER TO THE POOR IN BIRMINGHAM.

COMMENCING WITH AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY; AND CONTAINING LETTERS, AND THE TREASURED RECOLLECTIONS OF MANY FRIENDS.

LONDON:

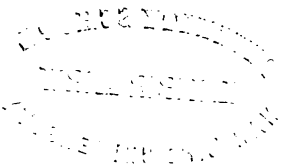
E. T. WHITFIELD, 178, STRAND,

AND

W. GREW AND SON, HIGH-STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

1854.

God is honoured and man edified, by notices of such of our race as have signally manifested the spirit of the Divinity in their lives, and have left a bright path to guide others to a better world.—CHANNING.



DEDICATION.

TO THE EARLY FRIENDS OF THE DEPARTED;

TO ALL WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THE MISSION;

TO ALL WHO HAVE ASSISTED IN THE CHURCH OR IN THE SCHOOLS;

TO THE POOR, WHO HAVE REJOICED IN THE MINISTRY OF OUR BELOVED FRIEND,

IS THIS LITTLE WORK AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED BY ITS SYMPATHIZING EDITOR.

PREFACE.

It is impossible to delineate accurately even an ordinary character. The subject of this Memoir was not of this class. All who knew him well will supply from their own affectionate remembrance, tones and expressions of countenance, which indicated a depth of wisdom and of sympathy, of fortitude and of gentleness, which no pencil of poet or painter can depict. All we have to give to those who knew him not, is a few bare facts—a dry skeleton of one of Nature's master-pieces, nurtured in the school of adversity, and surmounting every obstacle by the power of religious principle and Christian faith.

Friends and relatives, with grateful affection, have contributed to this humble work; in which the simple truth is set forth with a feeling that the slightest exaggeration would be an unfaithfulness to the memory of one who was remarkable for truth and integrity. May he long continue to inspire every one who reads this work with a determination to be a follower of him as he was of Christ!

AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I WAS born at Hinckley, in Leicestershire, 23rd September, 1815. I cannot trace back my descent beyond the father of my grandfather on my mother's side, whose name was John Gent. Of my grandfather Brooks's father I know nothing. My father, Joseph Brooks, was a soldier in the Leicestershire militia; he is still living. My mother's maiden name was Rachel Gent; she was a sensible, intelligent woman, full of piety and affection. As her first born, I received a large share of her attentions and instruction. To her judicious treatment and consistency of conduct, I feel I am indebted for my religious training and the strength of my faith in Christianity.

On Sunday evenings, it was her practice to gather round her the little ones of her household and a few of their companions, that she might read to them and tell them stories from the Bible. One of the earliest stories which I can remember, was of the death and resurrection of the Saviour. On the winter Sunday evenings, we were sometimes privileged to amuse ourselves with the pictures of a large family Bible, which has since become my property, and which from these reminiscences I value highly.

My grandfather, with whom we lived, and after whom I was named, was a man of singular character;

parsimonious in the extreme, yet kind to his grandchildren; gentle as a lamb when in a good humour, but terrible as a lion when in a passion, which was frequently the case. My parents had seven children. The first school I attended was that of Miss Fellows, who lived in a house opposite to the vicarage. Here I remained till six years of age; when I entered the National School on the week days, and the Independent Sunday School on the sabbath. Being a very precocious child, I made rapid progress, and in a short space of time reached the highest class. Before eight years of age, I was removed, and sent out as a seamer of stockings, receiving as wages, sixpence per week. I never made much hand at this employment, and was soon put into the frame.

We lived in a thatched house, which commanded a view of the market place: and it was a great delight to me to sit at the window and notice the characteristics of the people who passed, and to watch the gambols of the youth and the antics of those who were eager in their bargains or pleasures. Many were the lessons in human nature which I learned there. Being weak in body and not able to endure the rough play of associates, I indulged in meditation and solitary reading.

One circumstance made a deep impression on my mind: it was my exceeding plainness of countenance. Many a time have I been most grossly insulted by the low characters of the town on its account, and it was always with an expectation of insult that I left my home.

With a mind sensitive beyond expression, and a constitution delicate in the extreme, it is no wonder

I should seek retirement and love the companionship of books. Persecution did not make me a misanthrope; but it subdued my feelings and made me shy and reflective in the absence of friends; and I had many, who were glad of my company, when they were confined at home or not disposed for mirth. With all who knew me, I grew to be a favourite, until even the rude remarks made to me were not intended to insult me, but simply the style of language the ignorant used to each other. Still I saw that I was always liable to insult, and this haunted my mind perpetually. I know no greater injustice than for a person whom God has afflicted, to be on that account persecuted by man. Job says "To him that is afflicted pity should be shewn." But the ignorant and the cruel say "No; however excellent in morals, however benevolent in spirit, he is a fit subject for our mirth, and we will be merry, though we make him miserable." I remember well the first time the idea of my misfortune dawned upon me: I was about seven years old; I was helping a neighbouring cooper to stack some poles in his garden: about fifteen idle youths assembled, and began their sport with making observations on my personal peculiarities. The master wished me to go home; "for" said he "they won't rest while you are in the garden." I burst into tears: it was the first bitter moment of my existence. I do not think one of the party who thus rudely attacked me could read; they belonged to a race of British heathens now fast passing away; ignorant alike of the laws of God, and the duties of men. They attended no Sunday school. By far the greater number of these youths entered the army, or found their way to the penal settlements.

It is pleasant to look back upon the difficulties of the past—to spare an hour or two for a calm and thoughtful review of the events of a life of sorrow and toil—to mark the operation of the hand of Providence, which has led us by a way that we knew not, and wrought deliverance from sickness and death, when hope seemed just about to expire—to go over again the painful lessons of youth, and trace the steps of our slow progress from ignorance and error to knowledge and usefulness.

The small market town in which I lived did not possess the advantages of a good Mechanics' Institution; and for a long time I was too poor to avail myself of the more expensive Evening School. I did, however, prize the Sunday School, and there was laid the foundation of the little learning I now possess. I was placed there at the age of six years, and was able at that time to read the New Testament. I was quite the pet and the wonder of the thirteen or fourteen great fellows, more than double my age, who formed the remainder of the class. Kinder beings I would not wish to meet with, for they would lift me on and off the form, and sometimes take me on the knee whilst they found the chapter for me. This was a happy time, for I had not then lost my mother, and the world had not begun as yet to frown upon me. By and by came harder times; provisions rose in price and work grew scarce; sickness visited my home, and death robbed me of my kind and noble-minded mother. I was then too young fully to understand my loss, but I have felt it since in all its intensity. When sickness invaded my own frame and death appeared to be near, I felt in darkness and solitude, the want of her kind

presence and helping and cheering hand. Since then I have never seen an unkindness done to a mother, without feeling that the youth was unacquainted with her worth, and that a day would come when regrets and tears would follow.

As I grew up I had to depend upon my own exertions, and was left in a great measure to develop my own mind, and choose my own path. With an enfeebled body, and an employment which demanded the utmost industry to keep me from absolute want; with a soul burning for knowledge, which I could not but with the utmost difficulty obtain; will any one wonder at the melancholy which was consuming me? At times my heart was ready to break, and like the Psalmist of old, I have exclaimed, "Oh that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away and be at rest." Once, a kind lady visited me when at the worst in one of my illnesses, and asked me if I thought I should recover. I said, "I hope not, for I have nothing before me but a life of hardship and ignorance" —the two worst evils to which I thought a man could be subjected. She afterwards shewed me many kindnesses, and contributed in no mean degree to my ultimate recovery. It is now twenty years since I heard of her, but I have not forgotten her good deeds or her kind words. She never knew what became of her protégé; and this page is not likely to meet her eye, as she was then well stricken in years, and it is most probable she has long been "gathered to her fathers."

In the worst times, and under the most adverse circumstances, there was always one thing to cheer the gloom and beautify the path of existence; it was the passion for reading. The intercourse I thus held with

the good and the great of the past and the present, enabled me at times to forget my poverty, and make sickness itself a means of mental, as well as of moral and spiritual improvement. In my brighter moments, as ill health prevented my mingling with the robust in their rude and athletic exercises, I indulged more in the habit of observation and reflection. A walk at eventide, when the weather was warm and the heavens were curtained with clouds, through which the setting sun was pouring his rays and spreading his golden tracery, was more to me than all the gaieties of wealth, or the rough mirth of my own class. I felt myself rich in what no worldly goods can procure, no power on earth can withhold, and no might can crush—a soul alive to the beauties of nature, the tokens of Divine goodness and love, so clearly written in sunbeams, on the earth, in the air, and through the skies—but above all, in the deathless spirit and its hopes of heaven. From every thing I saw, I sought to draw instruction and delight. A story from ancient or modern history, a psalm or chapter from the Old or New Testament, a poem, a flower, the prattling of childhood—all were sources of joy, and furnished instructive employment for the mind.

In my youth I was very much attached to the society of the aged; listening to their stories of a bygone age, and their accounts of the characters whom they had known. Though my ancestors were lowly in station, many of them were very virtuous, and discharged their duties in an upright and faithful manner. Not one is remembered to have ever been brought before a magistrate for crimes and misdemeanours. They brought up their families in credit and industry, and

furnished many a defender of their nation's honour and safety in a time of war.

The father of my grandmother, Joseph Palmer, was a little old man, a member of the Presbyterian chapel at Hinckley, a thorough liberal in politics, when the Tory party were in high favour with the mob. On one occasion, when the election contest was very fierce, he was seen to enter the street with a yellow rosette, (the distinctive colour of the Radicals,) in his hat. He had not proceeded far, before the mob singled him out for attack; his hat was knocked off his head, and kicked as a foot-ball through the streets. This exemplary man lived to a great age, and died happily in the Lord.

Some of the happiest hours of my life were spent in the General Baptist Sunday School. It was here that religious influences were first felt in all the glow of youthful enthusiasm, purity, and love. My first distinct recollections of this new feeling, (new to me) were at a Missionary meeting, when my soul felt the solemnity of the service and the melting love of the Saviour's spirit.

Here, I lament to say, the autobiography closes, and a near relative takes up the pen to continue what could have been so much more fully related by the lamented subject of this memoir.

"While at the Sunday-school, he acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his instructors, and gave evidence of those talents which in after life so pre-eminently fitted him for that sphere of duty to which he was

called. He became a useful teacher in the schools, and a regular attendant at the devotional and class meetings, till he at length joined himself to that Christian church and was publicly baptized."

I believe there are few ardent and sensitive minds which are secure against temptations to break loose from restraint and routine, and to question the divine laws which were intended to guide them, or at least that outward manifestation of religion which they have witnessed. So it was with John Brooks. At the time when youth ripens into manhood and the spirit yearns for liberty and some ideal good which it has not yet experienced, he began to question the foundation of his faith, and was tried with dark and painful misgivings; but in no instance did they lead to any breach of purity and uprightness. The prayers, the example, and the instructions of his pious mother had not been in vain, and the troubled spirit found rest in humble faith. There were times, too, when he would separate himself from society, and seek communion with God in the fields, striving to imbibe inspiration from above, and to fill his mind with heavenly raptures; thinking these more in accordance with vital religion than the services of the sanctuary: but he found his path attended by persons who absented themselves from public worship with far different feelings, and he soon discerned that the religious sentiment was in danger of being weakened, instead of confirmed, by such a mode of spending the sabbath. I have often heard him refer to this period of his life when endeavouring to win over the sceptical, or urging the importance of a regular attendance on the ordinances of the house of God.

The following lines written about this time will shew the state of his feelings on these interesting subjects.

MORNING.

How sweet, when darkness wears away,
And twilight tells approaching day,
To leave the couch and seek the fields,
To taste the joy the morning yields!
And as the sun ascends the sky,
And passing winds just raise a sigh,
'Tis then I love to breathe my prayer,
While round me blows the morning air.

O, it is sweet in this still time,
To trace Jehovah's hand divine;
To cast the eye along the plain,
And view the fields of waving grain;
To see, in yonder woodland there,
This mighty Shepherd's generous care;
'Tis for His love I breathe my prayer,
While gently blows the morning air.

I love to sit beside some stream,
While peace sheds round me her soft beam,
And as the waters flow along,
To listen to the woodlark's song;
And as she sings her matin lays
In tributary strains of praise,
I rise, and humbly breathe my prayer,
As softly sighs the morning air.

'Tis good to leave the haunts of men,
And hide away in some dark glen;

To cast all worldly thoughts behind,
On holy things to fix the mind.
Then peace will on my steps attend,
And God will be my constant friend:
Then ever let me breathe my prayer
While round me blows the morning air.

The death of his mother, to which he has himself referred, took place when he was not sixteen years of age, and was to him an incalculable loss. About the same time his health grew worse; an inveterate cough settled upon him, and his bodily frame became more attenuated than before. Many of his friends thought that death had marked him for its prey: but, notwithstanding his physical weakness, his mind continued vigorous. An ardent thirst for knowledge was his governing feeling. When about nineteen years of age, in order to secure increased facilities for the cultivation of his mind, he induced one or two friends to contribute with him their weekly penny to purchase the penny magazines; and they met at a fixed hour in a silent grove; and as winter approached, they rented a room for fourpence a week, and built a fire-place with their own hands; and after some months, as their numbers increased, they were able to purchase a desk and writing materials. This was the commencement of a Mutual Instruction Society, which attracted the notice of Mr. Nutter, at that time the Unitarian Minister in Hinckley, who gave them lectures and other aid; and of Mr. Dare, (now the respected Minister to the Poor at Leicester,) who allowed them the use of his school-room and a cupboard to store their books.

Besides obtaining elementary instruction, these young men read some of the best passages from well-known authors, and produced original papers. In course of time, fifty adult persons met for mutual improvement and discussion, and collected more than a hundred volumes.

At this period, at the request of some of the leading inhabitants of the town, this society was united to the Mechanics' Institution. "I can never forget" says his brother-in-law, "his anxious watchfulness over this, his darling foster-son; or his animated visage as new difficulties were surmounted."

A letter from his uncle, Mr. Thomas Brooks, here enables me to carry on the history.

"Having drunk deeply of the cup of affliction, and endured much griping poverty, through low wages and want of employment, his sympathies were much drawn towards the working classes, more especially in that branch of labour to which he belonged. This brought him out as a public character. Those who heard him speak on different occasions can well remember how well he advocated the cause of suffering humanity. His predilections were always enlisted on the side of the oppressed; and when he saw a vast amount of unnecessary suffering, he was stimulated to make renewed efforts to remove it. This feeling led him to identify himself with the Chartist movement. He wrote several letters in one of their periodicals; but no sooner did he discern that the leaders contemplated the use of physical means to accomplish their object, than his sensitive mind instinctively recoiled from the horrid idea, and he left their ranks. At the same time he wrote a spirited letter in the Morning Chron-

icle, in which he exposed the folly and wickedness of those who advocated the adoption of violent measures to overthrow the established order of things. Perhaps no man abhorred the use of unlawful means even for the attainment of a just object more than he did; and he saw clearly that human woe will only disappear in proportion as righteous principles prevail among all classes."

The first time John Brooks spoke at the Town-hall at Hinckley was to advocate a petition to the legislature to repeal the Corn-laws; "and never," says Mr. Dare, "could a stronger proof of the necessity of repeal be found than in his spare gaunt figure, that told fearfully of want and destitution."

It was soon after this, that the stocking trade became so bad that many persons were reduced to the necessity of entering the Union House. The subject of this memoir was determined to set the example of yielding manfully to this hard necessity. He went to the house; but was not suffered to enter as a common applicant, but was at once admitted as instructor of the young. The cane and all severity were soon exchanged for words of kindness and encouragement: and love and obedience were spontaneously rendered to one whose spirit was so benevolent and subduing.

Nor was it only among the children that his influence was felt. Among all the inmates, order and cheerfulness were introduced, where murmurs and insubordination had before prevailed. On one occasion in particular, when a serious misunderstanding had arisen between the guardians and the inmates, he drew up a memorial which was willingly signed by

the discontented party, and peace and harmony were restored.

It was while thus engaged, that a neighbouring magistrate, Charles Holte Bracebridge, Esq., of Atherstone Hall, seeing the letters which had appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, sought out their author; and discerning Mr. Brooks's peculiar power to influence others for good, recommended him to Lady Byron: who with her accustomed liberality placed him at the training school at Ealing, near London, that he might enjoy the advantage of a more liberal education than he had been able to procure for himself.

Before accompanying our friend to Ealing, let us glance back on his career, that we may supply a few particulars which have not found a place in the details already recorded.

Let us fancy that frail and wasted form stretched upon a bed of sickness: he knows that his friends are assembled at an important anniversary of the Mechanics' Institution: he with difficulty and pain puts on his clothes; and supporting himself by the houses and railings, crawls to the meeting, listens to the discussion, and has scarcely strength to return to his couch of suffering. It was this same deep anxiety to improve his mind that made him spend a portion of his weekly earnings, which were inadequate to the supply of his bodily wants, in procuring the means of intellectual culture.

He was fond of frequenting in his walks the old road leading to Wyken Hall, once the residence of the martyr, W. Wightman, and also the scene of the Rev. W. Mountford's "Martyria;" and he seemed to have conversed with that departed spirit until he was

ready to sacrifice everything to the service of God and to become himself a living witness to the truth.

In his leisure hours he was surrounded by a few chosen friends, whom he inspired with somewhat of his own ardour in the cause of suffering humanity; to whom he read the articles he had prepared for the newspapers, and towards whom he felt during his whole life the affection of a brother.

When not with intimate friends, he was extremely reserved and even timid. It is difficult to imagine so much manliness and courage as he displayed when occasion called for it, in connexion with such habitual modesty and gentleness.

The following is a characteristic incident which ought not to be omitted.

On one occasion he was present at an entertainment given by his master to the workmen; when one of the principals of the establishment, being called upon for a song, indulged in that low propensity for the obscene which is frequently manifested in like gatherings, and was greeted with enthusiastic applause. Mr. Brooks, whose pure and earnest spirit was stirred to its inmost depths, rose to animadvert upon the song; he held up vice in its most hateful colours, in the presence of his master, and expressed his condemnation in so manly and unflinching a way that the songster was put to confusion.

The great kindness of the Lady who placed Mr. Brooks at the training school at Ealing was often, in after life, spoken of by him with gratitude: but there

is no account of his studies there, except what is found in a few letters which are introduced here as giving an insight into his mind and feelings at that period.

Ealing Grove, November 16, 1842.

My dear John,

I received your note, but was not able to answer it before. I have been very busy on my letters to the *Mercury* and *Chronicle*. Your request I feel a difficulty. Mere politeness I do not like. If you really feel respect, you cannot fail to make it known, Politeness with many is merely a gloss or varnish for hypocrisy: I detest the practice of grinning out a smile of apparent esteem when there is no esteem, but the contrary, hatred and bitterness; and when not these, contempt. It is loathsome to hear professions of welcome from persons who secretly wish you were gone.

I have been rather poorly lately; up late at night, studying from necessity; am better now. I am in Proportion, and, considering my deficiency in Arithmetic, I think very tolerable. I have gone over a great deal of ground, and have but little time for these things and Grammar and Geography. I have had to begin all again. I have not sunk in Lady B's estimation. Last week she wished the school-master of Lord L. to see me and inquire after my health. He introduced himself by saying that I had been recommended to him as a person of deep thought. I felt humbled, for I cannot persuade myself of this, with my limited knowledge and feeble attainments. I am perpetually haunted with the idea that I shall disappoint the expectations raised respecting me, and that would be dreadful.

I should like to have two or more years of education for the purpose of developing my faculties, and securing a regular, not superficial, knowledge of literature. It is fagging work to teach in school-time and continue my studies when others are at their recreations. You will make allowance for this.

Yours truly,

J. G. B.

Ealing Grove, 20th November, 1842.

My dear A,

I often commune with you in soul; though absent you are not forgotten. Though the smiles of the great ones of the earth are upon me, I do not feel secure from a reverse. Religion teaches me not to trust to princes or any arm of flesh. I do not forget that though a breath has taken me from obscurity and poverty, it can also hurl me back to my former state. You may depend I shall not desert the cause of the distressed; they may not appreciate my virtuous intentions; they may look upon me as their enemy; may loathe me as a traitor, and persecute me to the death; still I know it would be caused by ignorance, and I would pity, and not fail to befriend them.

Mr. and Mrs. M. called on Friday at the urgent wish of Lady B. to see me and state to her how I was. This is very kind. They gave me an invitation to their house and proffered the use of their library. Their daughter, Mrs. Jameson, is well known in the literary world. I have been to their cottage this afternoon: it is the abode of elegance, of plenty, and peace; it rivals the villas of Athens and of Pompeii. A splendid library of English and classical authors. The condition of the poor is not known: they are considered a vulgar herd. My conscience required I should do my duty. I said how could they be otherwise; taken to labour as soon as they could handle the needle, and made to earn part of their scanty subsistence, they cannot but be vulgar. Our voice must yet ring through the country. I wish I could go through Leicestershire, Notts, and Derbyshire, and make known the actual condition of the people. How was my last letter received? Is there any improvement? My health is weak; I grow impatient and almost unhappy, though I gradually feel my way and am certainly progressing. I depend on the Almighty; He is my friend, and I begin to feel Him near to help and comfort me as he did the patriarchs. I do not forget the conduct of Moses, who preferred to suffer with the children of Israel, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of the Egyptians. I

state this because you must not think I have no interest in your welfare. Every thing at present is honourable as regards my patrons. No hard task has been imposed upon me, and I have reason to believe that my writings in the cause of the poor have increased the regard they feel for me. I send copies to Lady B. of all I write. My respects to all friends.

Yours truly,
J. G. B.

Ealing Grove, 22nd February, 1843.

My dear John,

Your kind letter came when I had almost given it up. ..... I acknowledge I am apt to imagine the worst, but I would not part with my sensitive mind for a less feeling one. I am in hopes it will contribute to my usefulness, and give me a readier access to the hearts of the people. ..... I am still anxious for the success of the Mechanics' Institution. If it would be of any use, I would write to the operatives who made the noise at the entertainment. Do all you can to check it. If I was at home, I think I should be able to grapple with such vulgarisms. With all my meekness I possess a great deal of power. I do not say this in a vaunting manner. I entertain an idea of writing a lecture on the Worth of the Human Mind and the imperative necessity of those who possess talent, power, or riches, to cultivate this emanation from the Supreme Mind in all orders of the people. If you see Mr. Mountford, give my respects to him. Do you often hear him? As it regards my theology, I am not a Unitarian; I take the Bible simply as it stands. I believe that man is depraved: but I ask why did Jesus come to earth? It was to raise the fallen, to preach deliverance to the captive, to bring holiness, truth and perfection from the skies, and make them residents of earth. I cannot conceive that our Heavenly Father would impose a command which He knew it would be out of our power to perform; I cannot see any wis-

dom or goodness in that; therefore I consider that all the commandments of the New Testament are capable of being performed. I have admired Channing. His works are great and will endure. He was justly dissatisfied with religious parties of every kind. I shall not be satisfied with them until they unite works with their faith, and rise in their might to assail misery, want, ignorance, and every thing which hinders the progress of the people. This they do not sufficiently do at present; they do injury by preaching the powerlessness of man over evil, and the hopelessness of his depravity; by representing heaven as won by faith instead of works; by making the ignorant, the vicious, the mean, the impure and selfish, instead of the intelligent, the peaceable, the noble, the pure, the benevolent, the patriotic, the type of human nature. With this I disagree. Exhibit our Howards, our Newtons, our Miltons, our Hampdens, our Emmetts—our heroes, our martyrs, who have toiled and suffered, pined and bled for the good of the world, for the advance of truth, of justice, of right, instead of the ambitious, the criminal, the vain.

Believe me yours for ever,

J. G. B.

Ealing Grove, 21st May, 1843.

My dear E.

Your plaintive note touched me to the quick. In being dissatisfied with the world, appalled at its vices, and hopeless of its speedy renovation, you feel as all virtuous minds at times feel. Doubt not but you will have brighter views;—gleams, not only of that better land, but of those glorious times which revelation has unfolded. These feelings come upon us for our good, and are like the refreshing and gloomy thunder-clouds, uncomfortable while they last, but fertilizing, cooling, beautifying when over. Who can calculate the good they do when they drive us to the footstool of mercy—of God: when they bring us under the influence of the spirit of Jesus and

prepare our minds for the reception of his great truths: when they soften and hallow our feelings, and make us long for greater purity: when they stimulate us to greater zeal, and provoke us to greater love. This is their end. May they never be without their intended effect on both our minds! As I grow older I love you more and more; and long for the time when we shall not only see each other in the flesh but live together in heaven. Let us both strive after deeper views of religion, stronger incentives to duty, and nobler efforts at disinterestedness. Let us bear our sufferings as becomes noble beings on whom heaven has cast its endearing smile. Prophets, apostles, martyrs, saints, in every age—all whom God has commissioned to work for man, have had to labour, suffer, or "bear the world's dread laugh;" yet they were cheered and rendered thankful that they could hold communion with the Great Spirit, and that their prayers were accepted before the throne of the Eternal; that all are equal in the sight of our common Father; and that He has no favourites but them who do well and who love and practice virtue.

A few short years and we shall be removed; we shall have what we so ardently long for,—a place of rest and quiet; heavenly mansions, ministering angels, and the company of the good gathered from all kingdoms and all times. This will be the harvest of earth, the garnering of purity, of constancy and of love in heaven. There all will rest from their labours, and their works will follow them. May ours be found worthy of a place there! In the meantime, duty requires us to brave the storms of life and labour for the common good. To retire to peaceful bowers is cowardice or selfishness. Life is the period for action and labour; heaven for glory and rest. Warriors earn their laurels before they wear them: the patriot struggles with injustice before he commands the reverence and the thanks of ages: the philanthropist undergoes privations and toil in order to lessen human misery and increase virtue. It is our work to do all in our power to open the gates of knowledge to the

multitudes, now lost in hopeless ignorance and vice. The world requires nothing so much as examples of labouring, lowly and virtuous sufferers. In your periods of darkness and depression, you would do well to remember the words of the revered Channing: "It is enough to know that this human world, of which we form a portion, lives, suffers, and is moving onwards under the eye and care of the Infinite Father. Before His pure, omnipotent goodness, all oppressions must fall, and under His reign our highest aspirations, prayers, and hopes for suffering humanity, must sooner or later receive an accomplishment beyond the power of prophecy to utter or of thought to comprehend." I do not know whether I shall not be a preacher to the poor myself yet.

With more than a brother's love,

J. G. B.

In a letter to his father about this time, Mr. Brooks says, "I need scarcely say that my thoughts are turned towards the ministry. My conscience constantly points to it, and I think that will be my ultimate destination. That it may be so is my earnest prayer. It is from no sordid motives, but to be good and useful and preach the gospel to the poor. A circumstance and a question lately put to me have more particularly raised this hope."

Ealing, June 1st, 1843.

My dear John,

I have passed my examination. Mr. Bracebridge, who was present, expressed himself much satisfied. You do not for a moment think I was vain-glorious. Usefulness and duty are the only things which weigh with me. Dr. Ray

wishes me to go to Norwood Normal School to be finished in training. How does the Allotment cause get on? I am sorry affliction is so rife. Tell A. to write unreservedly to me of his plans. We have a great work to do. We see what we have done by union of minds before, and we can do yet more. .....

Your true and constant friend,

J. G. B.

While at Ealing, Mr. Brooks was called before a Select Committee of the House of Commons to be examined respecting the interest he had taken in obtaining Allotments of Land for the labouring poor. Ten pages of the Report, which is contained in a folio volume, are occupied with his judicious replies to the Committee. He shews a deep interest in the welfare of the poor and a clear insight into the subject. He had studied with advantage Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," one of his favourite books from the Hinckley Mechanics' Institute. A few extracts from the statements made by Mr. Brooks, will give some idea of the need of some benevolent effort on behalf of the poor stocking weavers.

"Whenever we obtained full employment we were confined 13 to 16 hours a day; and our earnings did not exceed 5s. a week.—The number of poor persons relieved in the parish of Hinckley in three months from March 25th to June 21st, 1842, was 2,457; the parish consisting of only 6,450 inhabitants; the number of rate-payers not exceeding 450; the amount of levy granted in one quarter alone during this time of depression, was 4s. 2d. in the pound. The possession of allotments would materially assist the holders to

keep off the parish.—I conceive that my present weak state of body is occasioned by the sedentary employment of my youth. My father and brother worked in the room where a part of the family slept: for days I have not stepped over the threshold of the door: had I been possessed of a small bit of garden I might now be robust and healthy."

On leaving the neighbourhood of London, Mr. Brooks spent some time for the benefit of his health at a farm house, belonging to Lady Byron, at Kirkby, in Leicestershire; and often visited her school at Newbold Verdun; still taking every opportunity for reading and study. It was during this time that he delivered a very useful lecture to the young on the importance of reform at home before they could expect governmental reform.

His desire to become a missionary grew more intense; and he was introduced to the late Rev. Mr. Johns of Liverpool, with whom he was allowed to spend a short time to gain experience by visiting with him the homes of the poor. At this period the congregation assembling in the New Meeting-house, Birmingham, under the pastorship of the late Rev. John Kentish and of their present minister, Mr. Bache, having resolved to establish a Ministry to the Poor, and having heard of Mr. Brooks, were anxious to engage his services. They considered that in works of Christian benevolence, the sincere followers of Christ might unite in a spirit perfectly free from sectarianism; and having satisfied themselves of Mr. Brooks' sincerity and liberality, did not think it either necessary or desirable to institute any enquiry respecting the precise creed of one who seemed so well quali-

fied for this important and difficult work; but immediately engaged him as their Domestic Missionary.

It may here be mentioned that a mutual attachment had some time previously arisen between Mr. Brooks and Miss Messenger, the sister of one of his early friends. The duties of a Christian minister seem peculiarly to require the aid of a kind and sympathizing wife; and no sooner had Mr. Brooks entered upon his new labours, than he returned home to marry, after which he resumed them with increased comfort and hope. An extract from a letter to a young man who sought his counsel some years after, deserves a place in this connexion:

"By spreading intelligence amongst the working classes, early marriages would be prevented and population kept within the bounds of the means of subsistence. When I was a working man, I entertained exactly the same views, and I made a vow never to marry unless I had a fair prospect of not only maintaining a wife but also of bringing up a family respectably and happily."

On the 1st December, 1844, Mr. Brooks came to Birmingham. The friends who were about to commence this new Ministry to the Poor were full of hope that he was well fitted for the task assigned him. Though feeble in body, he appeared strong in spirit; timid and shrinking from observation, he had yet an inward conviction that his mission was to the Poor, that he could draw their hearts to himself by sympathy, and that he could then direct their hopes heavenward and lead them to the Saviour.

When he first passed along the streets to which he was appointed, his heart sank within him; he had not courage to knock at any one's door, but wished that one would open to him. His gentleness and kindness soon made him a welcome visiter: and on no occasion was he ever repulsed or considered an intruder. In his first Report, he describes the people among whom he laboured, as "a race which has laid aside the virtues of the true savage, but still retains its migratory and predatory habits, having acquired none of the peaceful steady ones of the civilized state: taking nothing from civilization but its vices and its increased power of systematic evil, without its redeeming features." The first thing done in connexion with this work was the opening of Evening Schools for boys and girls; and nothing could exceed the interest Mr. B. manifested in the moral and intellectual training of the scholars. It is easy to believe that one who could attract the poor and ignorant by his gentleness and sympathy, would find also among the enlightened, fellow workers and assistants; nor did he ever desire to stand alone either in the labour or the glory of the duties in which he was engaged. Every person who shewed the ability to help was enlisted in the service: even the humblest instruments were employed, and he had an extraordinary power of turning to some account means which many would have despised, and reminding all who were raised from sin and sorrow by his aid that they should labour for the good of others.

On the 1st January, 1845, the People's Instruction Society was begun. It had for its object the providing cheap and efficient means for the improvement and

recreation of the working classes, apart from the dangers and temptations of the public house. In six months there were 130 members, and the library was raised to 150 volumes. The friends of the mission furnished the reading room, gas and fire. The subscription of one penny per week gave admittance to library, newspapers, evening classes in various departments of learning, and lectures. Each year the numbers increased beyond all expectation; and so successful was this effort of our Missionary, that he was applied to by persons from distant parts of England for his plans of operation. In the mean time every other branch connected with his work was making progress, and his feeble health made it necessary for him to leave to other hands this society which was dear to him as his first-born son. In his diary 10th October, 1849, he expressed his thankfulness that he is no longer permitted by his medical friend to continue the presidentship, as it was a source of great anxiety to him. In a letter to an intimate friend about the same time he writes; "I feel certain this trial will do me great good. I have had a long period of peace and quiet; this will shew me my privileges in a stronger light and make me thankful for every blessing. We need these trials, or they would not be sent. I am sure the word of God is true, 'All things shall work together for good to them that love Him.' I expect some of my people every minute to talk with me about some plans of usefulness. It is a great honour to work in the vineyard of the Lord, but it has its difficulties and dangers as well as its pleasures and rewards."

In reviewing the work of our Missionary, we find him adding one means of comfort and improvement after another; Savings' Club, Day School, Tract-distribution, &c: but nothing was so dear to him as the religious advantages he had the means of securing to his people. His Sunday Schools and the services of the House of God were looked upon as his strongholds against the temptations of the world; nor did he continue to feel hopeful of any family that, without an imperative reason, kept back from public worship. How tender and affectionate his exhortations from the pulpit were, all his flock can testify. How firm and unflinching he was in condemning sin, how severely he admonished those who tried to lead others astray, many can declare; and the terrors of the Divine displeasure were painted in colours as striking as was consistent with the oft repeated invitation to return to the way of righteousness.

On the 6th of August 1848, Mr. Brooks opened the Chapel in Lawrence Street, the fourth place of worship opened since the establishment of this Ministry to the Poor. Each removal had been occasioned by the congregation becoming too numerous for the place of meeting. In consequence of the attempts which were frequently made by Scripture Readers and even Ladies to deter people from attending the religious services conducted by Mr. Brooks, whom they pronounced an unbeliever, &c. he thought it desirable to print the following simple address, which would enable the illiterate to furnish an answer to their objections.

ADDRESS OF THE MINISTER

To the People assembling for Worship in the

LAWRENCE STREET MISSION CHAPEL, BIRMINGHAM.

[WITH SCRIPTURE REFERENCES.]

In the Word of God we are frequently reminded that persecution, and slander, and evil speaking, are to be expected as the portion of those who separate themselves from the world, and become the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Woe unto you," he says "when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."—LUKE vi. 26. "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—JOHN xvi. 33. It has given me much pain at different times to find that it is often said of me, by parties who profess great zeal for Christianity, that I do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. These people have never taken the trouble to enquire what my views really are, yet they have not hesitated to class me with the unbelievers; in fact "to bear false witness against their neighbour;" to disregard the words of the Saviour where he enjoins it as a duty, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."—MATT. vii. 1. I have thought it, therefore, incumbent upon me to give a clear and scriptural statement of that which I solemnly believe to be the great doctrines of the Bible. What is not contained in the Bible, what is not taught and enjoined by the Saviour and his Apostles, I reject. It is of human authority, and by it no man should be judged. "TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY: IF THEY SPEAK NOT ACCORDING TO THIS WORD, IT IS BECAUSE THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THEM."—ISAIAH viii. 20.

My dear friends; My great desire is to see you become Christians in deed and in truth, forsaking all evil speaking and all evil

doing: to see you live in charity with each other, and sinking all sectarian feeling and opposition in the great Christian principle of love. In the first days of Christianity it was said, "See how these Christians love one another." Let us seek to revive this holy practice, and by the consistency of our lives and our devotion to the Saviour, give to the world irrefutable evidence that "we have been with Jesus," and believe on him as our Lawgiver, Mediator and Redeemer.

When you hear me charged with disbelief of the essentials of Christianity, you can refer to this little pamphlet and ask them to read the following

DECLARATION OF FAITH

as believed and taught by your minister:—

1st.—I believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain the revealed word of God, and are the only standard of faith and practice.—ISAIAH viii. 20; JOHN v. 39; II. TIMOTHY iii. 15—17.

2nd.—I believe that there is only one living and true God, the Maker and Preserver of all things: who is self-existent, unchangeable, and eternal; boundless in power, wisdom, goodness, truth, and love, and possessing every other perfection in the highest possible degree.—DEUT. iv. 39; DEUT. vi. 4; ISAIAH xliii. 10; ISAIAH xlv. 21—22; ISAIAH xlvi. 9; ZECH. xiv. 9; MARK xii. 29; JOHN xvii. 3; I. COR. viii. 6; GAL. iii. 20; EPHES. iv. 6; I. TIM. ii. 5.

3rd.—I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world—that his character, his mission, his doctrine, his power, his authority, were all divine; that he was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of the otherwise invisible God; ordained to be the Mediator between God and man; and the Prophet, the Priest, the King, the Head, the Advocate, and the Saviour of his people, to whom he is made wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; and that for this purpose he received all things of the Father, who hath exalted him to be King of kings and Lord

of lords, and given him a name which is above every name, that in all things he should have the pre-eminence. I believe that "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," for "it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell"—that "he was the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," "the way, the truth, and the life," the sacrifice for sin, the abolisher of death, and the forerunner into heaven, where he liveth at the right hand of God to make intercession for us, and from whence he shall come in great power and glory to judge the world.—MATT. xi. 27; MATT. xxviii. 18: LUKE iv. 1; JOHN iii. 35; JOHN v. 19, 25, 26, 27, 30; JOHN vii. 16; JOHN xii. 49; JOHN xiv. 28—31; JOHN xvii. 2, 3, 4; ACTS ii. 22; ACTS iii. 22; ACTS v. 30, 31; ACTS x. 42; ACTS xvii. 31; ROMANS i. 3, 4; I. COR. xv. 24—28; EPH. i. 20—23; PHIL. ii. 9—11; COL. i. 15—19; HEB. ii. 9—18; HEB. vii. 25; I. PETER i. 18, 19, 20, 21; I. JOHN iv. 9, 10.

4th.—I believe that the Holy Ghost is the spirit of God;—that divine power and influence promised to all who desire and seek to obtain it, by which, in connexion with the word of God, the heart is renewed in righteousness; and that it is our duty to seek this promised blessing, by earnest, believing, and persevering prayer.—LUKE xi. 9—13; JOHN xiv. 25, 26; ACTS ii. 38, 39; ROM. viii. 14—16, 26, 27; EPH. i. 13, 14; I. THESS. iv. 8.

5th.—I believe that the salvation of man originates in the spontaneous mercy of our heavenly Father, who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life;" that, as "God is no respecter of persons," but on the contrary "his tender mercies are over ALL his works," so every one that desires to be saved, and seeks salvation humbly and sincerely, shall not fail to obtain it; that no one is shut out from everlasting life by any previous decree, or secret purpose of God, but only by his own obstinate and wilful disobedience; and that the elect, or chosen people of God, are those who accept the invitations and comply with the terms of the Saviour.—PSALM cxlv. 8, 9; ISAIAH liii. 6; ISAIAH

lv. 1; EZEK. xviii. 23, 29, 32; MATT. xi. 28; JOHN iii. 16; ACTS iii. 26; ACTS x. 34—43; ACTS xiii. 26, 39; ROM. iii. 22—24; ROM. x. 9, 11, 12, 13: I. TIM. ii. 4—6; II. PETER iii. 9; I. JOHN ii. 2; I. JOHN iv. 14; REV. xxii. 17.

6th.—I believe that we are justified before God, not on account of our works or deservings, but by divine mercy and grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, "who died the just for the unjust," and "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."—JOHN vi. 47; ACTS xvi. 31; ROM. iii. 20—26; ROM. v. 1; GAL. iii. 11, 26; EPH. ii. 8, 9; I. JOHN v. 1, 5.

7th.—I believe that the Supper of the Lord, or partaking of bread and wine in remembrance of him, is an ordinance instituted by Christ, and intended to be continued while the church is in its present militant state; and that to observe this ordinance is consequently the duty and privilege of all those who feel repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and a desire to "flee from the wrath to come."—MATT. xxvi. 26—30; MARK xiv. 22—25; LUKE xxii. 19, 20; I. COR. xi. 1, 2, 23—30.

8th.—I believe that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust, and that God will judge the world by Jesus Christ, and render to every man according to his deeds. —MATT. xxv. 31—46; ACTS xvii. 31; ACTS xxiv. 15: ROM. ii. 6—11; II. COR. v. 10; REV. xx. 11, 12.

In the above Declaration I have endeavoured faithfully and clearly, "to give every one that asketh, a reason of the hope that is in me with meekness and fear."—I. PETER iii. 15, 16.

The Saviour and his apostles urged the unbelieving Jews and the first converts, to search the scriptures. Paul speaks of the Bereans as "more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word of God with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things (that is the things taught by the apostle) were so. Therefore many of them believed."—ACTS xvii. 11, 12. Let it not be thought that the above Declaration contains all my belief, for it would be impos-

sible to compress all religious truth into so small a compass. I believe ALL that the wisdom of God has seen fit to reveal to man in his Word. I am tired of religious contention and of religious hate, and long for religious peace and religious love. My part is chosen: I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified and glorified. The Church has too long been divided on matters that are not revealed. Like the scribes and pharisees of old, we have been occupied with the vain traditions of men, but neglecting the weightier matters of the law of our great Teacher—the love of God and the love of our neighbour. We are fellow pilgrims seeking a common heaven. Let us not fall out by the way. We serve the Prince of Peace: let us not then be uncharitable to each other. They who condemn, are fallible like myself. Why then do they presume to judge? How long, O Lord, shall thy church be riven by the conflict of human opinions, and contrary interpretations of thy Word? While one is shouting, "Lo! here is Christ, and lo! there is Christ;" "Only here is salvation, only there is safety," let me come to my Saviour, the Son of God, without the intervention of my erring, sinning fellow mortals, and drink in from the pure wells of Christian truth and knowledge, the love and the grace, which shall lead me to heaven.

All Protestant sects, indeed, tell the learner to listen to Jesus Christ; but most of them shout around him their own articles so vehemently and imperiously, that the voice of the heavenly Master is well nigh drowned. He is told to listen to Christ, but told that he will be LOST, if he receives any lessons but such as are taught in their HUMANLY CONSTRUCTED creeds. He is told that Christ's word is alone infallible, but unless it is received as interpreted by fallible men, he will be excluded from the communion of Christians.

My friends; in the midst of the uncharitable contentions of the present times, let us cleave to the Word of God, and assert the right to worship according to the dictates of our own consciences, and prove ourselves the "followers of them who through

faith and patience inherit the promises." From this unjustifiable spirit of condemnation, of which we NOW complain, arose all the persecutions and martyrdoms of past times. Our opponents cannot imprison us, it is true, nor take us to the market-place to burn us at the stake; but they show that though lacking the power, they have still the old spirit of persecution, by their desire to deny us the name of Christians and to shut against us the gate of heaven. But how consoling it is to know that nothing but sin can "separate us from the love of Christ."

I am, yours in the Gospel of Christ,

J. G. BROOKS.

DIVINE SERVICE IN LAWRENCE STREET CHAPEL,

Sunday Mornings at Eleven; Sunday Evenings at Half past Six; Monday Evenings at Half past Seven; and Wednesday Evenings at Half-past Seven.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IS OPEN

In the Morning at Nine, and Afternoon at Two.

THE DAY SCHOOL IS OPEN

Mornings at Half-past Nine, and Afternoons at a Quarter-past Two.

THE FREE SEWING SCHOOL IS OPEN

Afternoons at a Quarter past Two.

THE NEW MEETING EVENING SCHOOL IS OPEN FOR GIRLS,

On Monday and Thursday Evenings at Half-past Seven.

THE LAWRENCE STREET BOYS' EVENING SCHOOL IS OPEN

Tuesday and Thursday Evenings at Half past Seven.

A LIBRARY OF 2000 VOLUMES

Is open to the Public on Monday and Wednesday Evenings at Half-past Eight, and Saturday Evenings from Half-past Seven to 9. Terms One Half-penny per week.

SAVINGS CLUB

Open to the Public, on Monday Mornings from 10 to 12, for sums of a Half-penny and upwards.

The Savings can always be withdrawn on one week's notice.

The most marked characteristic of our friend was faith in the native goodness of the human heart when touched by the spirit of love and sympathy. I have seen him draw tears from the eyes of persons who were considered hardened in sin. One Sunday afternoon several youths came to the door to interrupt the instruction that was going on in the schools. As it was not the first offence, Mr. Brooks was resolved to put a stop to it, and went himself into the street, as the teachers had not courage to encounter youths so strong and violent. On seeing Mr. Brooks they ran away; but filled with determination he overtook one of them, and with some assistance dragged him into the building while he sent for the police. As soon as our friend had recovered breath to speak, he addressed the young man so impressively that tears and promises had gained his release before the arrival of the men who were sent for to apprehend him.

While the great work of the Missionary is in the humble abodes whose occupants would otherwise remain forlorn and dejected, a prey to want and despair, he has also to provide food for the mind of the young and vigorous, and attractions for those who would otherwise seek excitement where vice reigns triumphant. Mr. Brooks spared no pains to interest the more intelligent by lectures on Astronomy and other subjects adapted to improve their minds: he made drawings and induced others to assist in illustrating his subjects. The Eruption of Mount Vesuvius, Egypt, Babylon, and Nineveh were among the subjects chosen to excite their curiosity. Always extremely fond of reading himself, he did all he could

to induce others to love books. The establishment of an extensive Library was one of his darling projects, and at a tea-meeting in his chapel he declared in a speech full of enthusiasm and eloquence that at his death he would rather leave a noble library as his memorial than have a marble statue erected to his honour. Nothing afforded a higher gratification to his mind than to hear of the benefit persons derived from reading the books he had put into circulation:—they had kept this man from the public house, that from gambling, and made a third fond of his home. I have seen our friend sitting in the midst of tracts on which he was stitching covers for distribution, looking as joyous and hopeful as if he were sending forth ministering angels laden with blessings.

Few persons are better informed on subjects of general literature and science than Mr. Brooks was. With so frail a body, it was wonderful that his intellect should have been so vigorous, his memory so retentive. Had he been able to rise early, he would have studied Latin; but his arduous and important duties obliged him to be contented with a knowledge of his own language alone. He was particularly fond of the writings of Baxter and the old divines; and his reading was made available in the preparation of sermons, to which he latterly devoted much more attention than at first. In a letter to a friend he says, "I blame myself that I have not made greater exertions to succeed as a preacher. I am satisfied it would be a great aid to my usefulness, and I am determined to prepare at least one sermon a week in a full and proper manner. I am now writing a sacramental one for Sunday evening. If my discourses

become of a higher cast, I have no doubt an important class of persons will gradually be brought under my ministry. People above the very illiterate will not long listen to plain and simple discourses which to them appear childish. I attribute the smallness of the Mission congregations to the fact that we have treated them to mental and spiritual fare much too poor. I will try to attract around me those competent to work for God and humanity." This resolution to prepare for Sunday and not to trust to notes and preaching extempore was persevered in till within a week of his departure. Those who knew how his time was occupied when not on his visits among the poor, would not wonder that he found it difficult to write as much as he desired. So many needed his advice or sought his guidance that he was continually interrupted. Yet so patiently did he enter into their difficulties and point out the remedy for their troubles, seeking always to promote their spiritual welfare even while giving the temporal advice they sought, that he could not reproach himself for having wasted his time. So tender was his sympathy, and so attractive his gentleness, that many laid before him their most private thoughts, and confided to him their secret trials. To some who complained of the unkindness of near relatives, he would say again and again, "Pray for them:" and great was his faith in the efficacy of prayer. I need not say that in his own family the grateful incense burned upon the altar; and the beautiful prayer offered on the last evening of his life will never be forgotten by his sorrowing relatives.

While speaking of the home of our valued friend, let me pay the tribute that is due to the faithful husband

and the affectionate father. Long may he live in the grateful remembrance of those to whom he was so great a blessing, so precious an example! One of his severest trials was the loss of his little girl; the anticipation and subsequent realization of which are thus alluded to in his diary. "All this day my mind has been in a state of great grief. I love the dear little one; she is a child of great promise and apparent talent. I wish to say 'Thy will be done, O Lord, and not mine.' I have from the first dedicated her to God; He gave and He has a perfect right to take away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. The bitterness of separation is over. I feel now we can part with her if the Lord thinks well." Thus did the affectionate father bow, and encourage his sorrowing wife to bow to the Divine will. Often since has he expressed, in reference to this bereavement and another which followed two years after, that he felt weaned from earth by the thought of those little spirits who awaited his arrival on a heavenly shore.

In a letter to his brother-in-law, who was suffering from a similar trial, he says, "We can feel for you from the losses we have ourselves sustained: but we sorrow not as those without hope. These darling children were not ours; they were lent to us to train for the skies. They have gone before us instead of following: we shall see them again, but in a brighter world. Let these bereavements quicken us in our journey to heaven. I never realized so completely the Christian thought of heaven as I did when our Amelia died. I thought of heaven, the home of my child, very differently from what I had done before: one of my band had gone to enter on its possessions, and I began

to feel it more as a solemn reality and a sustaining hope. It will be some time before you are able to speak of him without sorrow. The promises of Scripture, the knowledge that the wisdom of God is infinite and that His kindness is without bounds, gradually opens our hearts to His divine influence, and enables us to say: 'It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good.'"

Having seen some allusion to the Diary, it may be interesting to know that it contains the record of that severe scrutiny with which a good man ever examines his inner life, and all the springs of thought and action as in the sight of God: the prayer of penitential sorrow for some neglected opportunity or languor of devotion: nor do we find him excusing himself on the ground of sinking health and spirits, though the dates in most instances clearly point to those periods when increasing weakness made it a duty to relax all bodily and mental exertion. A single extract will serve as a specimen of his vigilance. "The congregation to-night very numerous: deep attention seemed to mark every face. I heard that my visit to the Gullet had done good, and was the theme of the whole place. I was tempted to feel proud, as though I had done it of my own power; but I am thankful I was able to check it altogether, and give the glory to Him to whom it is due. I wish to spend and be spent in His service; to be used as His instrument; to be nothing, so that Christ may be savingly preached, and God may be all in all."

I should scarcely give a correct idea of Mr. Brooks, without alluding to the refined tastes which his friends were anxious to give him opportunities of gratifying,

as a needful relaxation from the severe and depressing toils which were his ordinary lot. Music, painting, and the beauties of Nature had great charms for him: he had an eye and an ear which wanted only leisure for their cultivation to make them produce great results. Sacred music was peculiarly delightful to him. He was also a great admirer of our best poets, and he might have been a poet himself, had not his regard for duty kept him from giving the reins to imagination.

The following verses will be valued by some as proceeding from his pen.

HYMN FOR THE SOCIAL TEA PARTY.

Lawrence-street Mission Chapel.

O Thou to whom our prayers ascend,
The God and Father of our race,
O hear us now, whilst friend with friend,
We lowly bow before thy face.

Thou art our Father; thy kind hand
Surrounds, supports, and governs all,
O look upon this lowly band,
And listen when thy children call.

O may the truths which Jesus taught
Fall on our hearts like dew from heaven;
His spirit purify each thought,
And faith and holiness be given.

May he our shepherd ever be,
And we within his fold have rest;
From all temptation may we flee,
And know thy will is always best.

O let thy will on earth be done,
As 'tis by all the blest above;
And by obedience to thy Son,
Give thee our surest test of love.

O warm our hearts, inspire our tongues,
Fill all our souls with heavenly peace;
And unto thee shall flow our songs,
Till life and thought on earth shall cease.

Then, when our trials all are done,
And we with saints surround thy throne,
We'll give the victory to thy Son,
Who brought the power from thee alone.

A HEART-FELT PRAYER.

Spirit inhabiting all space,
That changest not though countless ages roll,
How shall I bow before thy face?
For sin hath long and deeply stained my soul.

I know that thou art great and pure,
And thy all-seeing eye hath marked my course;
Thy punishments are always sure,
And on the guilty shall exert their force.

But, Father, thou one way hast made
By which we may be meetened for thy heaven;
Thy word before us has been laid,
And Jesus Christ, thy promised gift, been given.

Through him I trembling, hopeful, come,
And lay myself thy mercy-seat before;
Repentant, grieving, lowly, dumb,
Oh! once again thy kindly love restore.

How sad is all without thy smile;
Earth is indeed a dreary, sad abode,
Where man may wander for awhile,
Distressed and weary with a dreadful load.

But when thy grace to man is given,
And prayerful, trustful, he can look to thee,
Earth then partakes the hues of heaven,
And heaviness and grief are made to flee.

O come, and with me constant dwell;
That in temptation's dark and trying hour,
I may have strength to battle well,
And gain the victory through thy conquering power.

Spirit, inhabiting all space,
That changest not though countless ages roll,
I lowly bow before thy face,
In gratitude for pardon to my soul.

Mr. Brooks wrote a series of letters in *Aris's Gazette* on the necessity of establishing a Free Industrial School, two years before the one in Birmingham was erected. He had a lively sympathy with Mr. Thomas Wright, the benevolent visitor of the prisons in Manchester, and with Mr. Ellis, the able conductor of a school for Juvenile Criminals at Saltley, near Birmingham, and was much interested in his conversations with them respecting Reformatory Schools; while earnestly desirous that preliminary measures should be taken for the prevention of crime as well as opportunity afforded for the reformation of the offender.

It would be easy to fill a large volume with the well-digested thoughts on various subjects, which, as time rolled on, were brought before the mind of this ardent philanthropist; but it appears more desirable in this little work to record chiefly feelings and opinions, which we find expressed in his own words, and to give letters and extracts from letters written without reserve to his most intimate friends.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

Speaking of a letter he had sent to the paper on the subject of the Truck system, he says,—

Birmingham, July, 1845.

I am satisfied of this, that if what I propose is founded on sound principles it will stand and grow: if not, I am quite content that it should pass away and be forgotten. I do not wish anything to succeed because I propose it. You seem to think the evil will cure itself; of this I have my doubts. Evil can only be corrected by changing the circumstances of those enduring it, or at least by giving them the power and the desire to escape from it. Ignorance can never correct itself so as to bring knowledge to the mind. A man, brought up in ignorance without teachers, books, and means, must remain ignorant. If we suffer from ignorance we must found schools; if from oppression we must emancipate each other.

Birmingham, May, 1847.

I am glad you are consistent in the matter of state education, but am not sorry that the bill was passed. Dissenters were certainly bending the head and stretching out the hands to the state clergy. Dissenting ministers thought, because they

grew a little more polite to them, that they had ceased to be enemies. Now they know there can be no compromise. The great battle to be fought in the present day is against the unholy union of Church and State. Against this, I for one, shall buckle on my armour as I see the "giants" of the dissenting interest are now doing, and I rejoice to see this determination on their part.

Birmingham, December, 1847.

You must not think that because I am a Unitarian, my soul is bound up in ice. Never were my feelings towards God and Christ and heaven stronger than now. Nor must you think that I reject the doctrine of the Atonement. I feel that it is the most complete evidence of God's love and the Saviour's condescension. At times my mind sinks, for mine is a difficult employment and the opposition I meet with is very trying. The orthodox condemn us because we do not believe in three persons in one God. They have not been able to draw my people from me, but I do feel pained at their want of Christian love. As far as I can, with God's help, I will act the part of a Christian to them. I do not, I will not, render railing for railing, anathema for anathema; but when they speak evil I will bless and curse not. I will not oppose, but sigh for union. From this time I shall take little heed to their slanders, but pursue quietly my course like my beloved Lord and Master, remembering his divine words: "If they do these things in the green tree, what will they do in the dry!" The Lord has prospered the work of my hands and blessed me. We are compelled to enlarge our borders, and have taken a much larger place for worship.

Birmingham, March 13, 1849.

My dear Friend,

I need not say how welcome your letter was. * * * * I am much better, and hope to resume my work soon, and to be

more alive to my religious duties and privileges; to labour for God and for Christ and for dying sinners. I will also endeavour to act wisely, and treasure up my strength for my important work. I feel I want more spirituality: this is the great desire of my soul to be nearer to God and to live in His smile. God's plans are always best for humanity, though we cannot understand them; this is not necessary, and were it otherwise, would not always promote our love and faith. God demands our trust as well as our heart, and in the Gospel He has seen fit to exercise the faith of his people. Many dislike this; they wish to have everything rationalistic; they wish to understand the purposes of God, which He withholds from them. I wish more and more to place myself unresistingly at His disposal. I have His word that a heaven of joy is reserved for me; and though I do not understand its nature, I know it is none the less real; for Jesus has gone before. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." "We shall bear the image of the heavenly." "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, &c." "We according to his promise look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." "There shall be no night there." "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, &c." These passages give us some glimpses of that happy world. May we and all our dear friends be more prayerful and determined to secure its glories and immortality. I quite agree with you in all your remarks, &c.

I am yours in the bonds of Christ,

J. G. B.

Bowness, Windermere, 1st. July, 1849.

My dear John,

I have enjoyed my visit to the Lakes very much indeed. The weather has been very pleasant, and we have had some excellent trips by steamer on Windermere. Yesterday we

went to Ambleside and climbed Loughrig Fell. The scenery was grand. Many lessons are to be learned from mountain tops and lowly valleys, dashing waterfalls and extensive sheets of lake. Here you listen to the music of Nature, the song of birds, the hum of insects, the sighing of the winds among the crags and trees, and the tuneful sound of many waters as they seek the lake. This rich and noble treat will never be forgotten by me. I am quite well, and to day have rambled as far as the ferry, then crossed the lake, and strolled on gently rising ground among the hills till we reached Sowrey. Here we visited a village school, and startled the poor schoolmaster by sitting down to hear the children's lessons: I felt very much for him. On our return we saw the clouds resting on Coniston Old Man, a high peak that attracted the vapours. Here, as we rested, my friend repeated very feelingly Thomson's Hymn on the Seasons, and while she was doing so, the cloud came and passed like a veil on the top of the mountain.

I am, yours affectionately till death,

J. G. B.

July 4th, 1849.

My dear J,

I write to you from Bowness on the borders of Windermere. This is a rich treat indeed, to be out amongst the mountains far from the strifes and contentions of men, and apart with the divine Spirit, who created all, and sees the desires and intentions of His children. In climbing the sides of these noble elevations, I have for once realized the feelings of the poet when he says,

"Far from the world, O Lord, I flee,
From strife and tumult far, &c."

In some things I have experienced more vicissitudes than most. I have lost the friends of my youth; had my motives terribly misunderstood; have been kind to many, but been rudely treated by some; have loved peace, and been the subject of uncharitable remarks; I set my affections on my children, and the Lord has removed one of my treasures. This is life, with its lessons of wisdom and experience; and in my case it has been seasoned with the correcting influence of affliction. But what have been my mercies! Freedom from anxiety; the blessing prayed for by the Prophet when he said "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me." Kind friends, a good wife, a people devoted to me, friends in heaven, reclaimed, I hope, through the influence of the divine spirit on my labours; children, I trust destined to be useful to the Church and stars in the Redeemer's crown; and though last not least, a well-founded hope of a glorious immortality for myself. While here below we are too earthy; in heaven we shall not only get rid of our clay but of our shortness of vision. There we shall see without a cloud between, we shall be able to read each other's motives clearly. Purity and love will reign throughout the boundless regions of heaven: we shall be intent on admiring the works of a holy and infinite God, in endeavouring to fathom the sources of His exhaustless love, and in singing the song of angels saying, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!" To me the hopes and promises of religion become more endeared. I wish to be perfect, but I know I cannot attain it here. I must pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and awake in heaven; and then I shall have my desire and make no more mistakes.

I beg you to accept my kindest regards and most sincere affection.

J. G. B.

Extract from a Letter to his friend A, who was, like himself, a Missionary among the Poor.

Birmingham, November, 1849.

I do think you would be doing more for your own real improvement by devoting the precious time wasted over Euclid to getting up every evening the lessons marked in the school routine for the following day. What should we think of a pack-man, who, instead of trudging on in the beaten path that leads to the village where his commodities are to be disposed of, should, merely to render his muscles tough, climb all the high declivities in the neighbourhood and waste his time in useless journeys? He had much better fit himself for a pedestrian as his predecessors have done before, gathering strength and tact by attending to his immediate duties. If you understood the whole of Euclid and Algebra too and were not well grounded in things necessary to be imparted to the poor children, you would be none the better for it; you will not be judged by your efficiency as a teacher of Mathematics, but by your efficiency as a teacher of the lowest, because the foundation, part of education. It is common for persons who have had early advantages to recommend to men like you and me, just emancipated from the loom, the study of things they are engaged upon themselves, forgetting the years of previous study they had to pass through, before their tutors would allow them to engage in these higher branches of knowledge. I state this from experience. It would have been better for me had I met with a friend in the outset to give me this advice which I tender to you."

Birmingham, 1849.

My dear friend,

I write to say that I am better though very weak. Last night we had a teachers' meeting in my room. All seem anxious I should exert more authority. One of the teachers who

had been induced to sign a memorial, on learning that he had been imposed upon, nobly expressed his contrition, and last night presented me with the following verses of his own humble construction.

"CONDEMN NOT TILL ALL HOPE IS LOST."

O dearest pastor of thy flock,
Who still retains the shepherd's care,
And who did not their misery mock,
But still maintained their cause without a fear:

Heaven, O man! shall thee with blessings crown,
Because thy work is not labour in vain,
For one kind word spoken in love without a frown
May draw the guilty sinner back again.

That man,* if words in kindest tones are spoken,
May come to be a man sincere;
But if the laws of Christ are broken,
That man may altogether disappear.

Though the rhyme is miserable, still it shews a good disposition and great attachment to me. I value it as the offspring of an uneducated youth who sees the object of our mission and is willing to help. He is a descendant of a Pole, and has been apprenticed to a shoe-maker.

I believe we shall go on well now.

I am yours, &c.
J. G. B.

* The man whom the discontented teacher wished not to be allowed to come to School.

Birmingham, April, 1850.

My dear A,

I deeply sympathize with you in your troubles, and should have written sooner but have been out through very severe illness. My labours are arduous. There are difficulties in every pursuit. While you are panting to do more, and feel like an Arab courser under the bridle, I am worked too much. Our friends would like me to do less, but leave me very much to myself. Do the best you can for the people among whom you dwell. Under present circumstances, do not look too much to direct influence, but be as far-reaching as you can in your views and efforts. Sow the seeds of thought and improvement noiselessly. The adults are in the majority of cases hopelessly dull; they would not thank you to break the yoke of bondage under which they groan. Your scholars are your true vocation. Sow the good seed there; they will amply repay your patience and toil. Store their minds by conversation, make them acquainted with the great events of history, and the many topics of interest in the present day. The worst is, we expect to see results as soon as we labour, like the workman who wants his pay as soon as he has done any job. The men who heralded in the great Reformation laboured in secret through years of suffering and contempt, and by the most indirect means. The clergy were libelled in songs; their vices were cautiously made known and the Scriptures were let loose. When Luther arose, the world was thus prepared: had it not been for the labours of hosts of men now forgotten and then unknown, Luther would have been easily crushed. Now I do not wish you to do any thing that is wrong, but only to see how to make your situation useful: what you would teach is, I know, right, and would tend to elevate men. Truth and the love of freedom must sometimes be taught by insinuation, rather than by direct means. Wait patiently; tell your scholars of such men as F. Douglas and Elihu Burritt; make them hate slavery and oppression and love the patriot.

You can place in their hands such works as Channing's "Present Age," "Self-culture," and "Elevation of the Workers," &c. Allow me to educate, and I do not care who preaches. You will not so soon see the fruits of your teaching, but they will be none the less sure. The generation taught by you will be more sturdy and independent; less truckling to power; less passive to bad doctrine and more fitted to battle with the oppressor. Present evils are the growth of many generations, yet we expect to throw them off in a year or two; this is unreasonable. Do not kick against destiny, but pursue the course necessary to undo the burdens of the world. It is inch by inch, line by line, atom by atom. Look at the French; how slowly they emerge from slavery! they indeed throw it off by a mighty effort, and foolishly take it up again; and why? They lack education and the experience Englishmen and Americans learned long ago, under the Saxons, Normans, and Cromwell, John Hampden, Milton and hosts of patriots, lecturers, teachers and books.

Things not calculated to wear well and fit well are doomed to fall: shams must give place to realities.

I am, yours truly as ever,

J. G. B.

To the same friend he writes in his next letter, dated July, 1850, after speaking of the death of Sir Robert Peel, "Let us ever be ready for the judge. We are both in the way of duty. In some very important respects you have the advantage of me. I long for quiet, and to see less sin. I look back to the period when we talked, wrote and rambled together, as the happiest period of my life. We were so disinterested; so anxious to lay ourselves out for usefulness; and I think wonderfully successful. "What shall we render to the Lord for all his mercies!" I keep my hands full: lessons, sermons, letters, visiting the poor, &c., &c., so that time really seems to have wings."

To another friend.—Birmingham, July, 1850. "On Thursday I shall officiate at the Cemetery at the burial of John Davis. I was with him about five hours before death. He was full of calm peace and ready for the coming of his Lord. I was sent for at his earnest request, and shall never forget his affectionate manner. He was one of those reclaimed from drunkenness through our means. Before his connexion with us, he used to beat his wife and neglect his family, but afterwards they lived most happily together. It was an affecting sight to see him gather his family around him to give them his last blessing, and to commend them to the care of Him, who has promised to be the Father of the fatherless and the widow's God."

Birmingham, March, 1851.

"The mission prospers, but not to the extent I could desire. Very much good has been done, but offences will arise respecting the most trifling things. There seems a universal restlessness; a wild love of freedom, an upheaving of mind which nothing but the spirit of Jesus can calm. We are on the eve of great events, but I shall soon enter on the "rest which remains for the people of God." The great battle to be fought is between truth and error; light and darkness; zeal and indifference. The struggle will be fearful, but truth will eventually prevail."

Letter addressed to each of the Boys on leaving the Sunday School:—

My dear young Friend,

It has been much impressed on my mind to write to you to tell you how much I long and how fervently I pray for your present and eternal welfare. You have talents which I hope you will dedicate to the service of the Lord who is "the giver of every good and perfect gift." For the right use of your

talents and the opportunities given, you will hereafter have to render an account; and the reward which will follow will be in strict accordance with the good use to which they have been put in life. Religion is designed for all times and all ages; and its hopes and joys are as much needed and as grateful to the soul in youth and health as in sickness or old age. The path of religion is strewed with heavenly pleasures; it renders youth more thoughtful and makes them more lovely and amiable. Young Christians are at once the joy and the hope of the Church of Christ. As the minds of the young disciples are matured,—as their knowledge is increased and their virtue becomes strong—as their piety becomes more confirmed and their humility is made habitual—and as they go on from one degree of perfection to another, their power for good is felt until they become more and more the beloved of God and the respected among men. May the God of all grace convert your soul and shower down upon you the choicest blessings of His Providence and the richest treasures of His kingdom, and enable you to withstand every temptation which may beset your path through life.

Your sincere friend,

J. G. BROOKS.

KNOWLEDGE; ITS IMPORTANCE, DIGNITY, AND INFLUENCE.

Addressed to the Members of People's Instruction Societies.

FEW things will exert a more beneficial influence on the character of the age, than the gatherings of working men after the toils of the day, for the purpose of mental and moral improvement. Time was when conviviality and drunken mirth were thought to be the happiest modes of spending the leisure hours; and the capacity to drink deeply, to wrestle or to fight, the most manly of all attainments. Since then light has dawned upon us; knowledge has slowly but surely made its way amongst the mass;

right views and good feelings are spreading their influences around; man is waking up to a perception of his duties; becoming acquainted with his long hidden and misused powers for good; learning his true vocation on earth; and appreciating the glorious revelations religion has unfolded respecting the future life: the follies, the superstitions, the wars of the past, are now viewed with less of the bias of party, and therefore seen more in their true hideousness, and destructive influence over the mind and character. But knowledge as yet has only just entered on its bright and glorious career. For ages it was used exclusively for the benefit of the ruling powers, and for the more perfect subjugation of the many. Philosophy then took up her abode in the palaces of the great and the temples of the priests, while the great multitude was considered as unworthy of initiation into her sacred mysteries. Now, however, she is leaving her golden retreats, and disdains to be kept in luxurious retirement, merely to suit the interests or pamper the pride of a class. God designed her to comfort, to gladden, and improve, the hearts and minds of all. Her mission is to walk in the majesty of wisdom through the kingdoms of the world—lifting up the lowly, binding up the broken hearted, giving deliverance to the captive, breaking the rod of oppression, restoring man to his true dignity, and giving him his right place in the world. Her office is indeed a glorious one; but her operations must not be impeded or circumscribed, they must be free as the winds which sweep over the deep, as the waves which wash every shore, and as the beams of the sun which visit and bless every land.

To no class does knowledge confer greater honor than to that of the workers; to no class is it of greater importance in any respect; and to no class does it bring more pleasure. I would ask you to contrast the condition of those in your own neighbourhoods, who neglect all culture of the nobler faculties of their nature, with those who persevere in the opposite course. Is it possible to honor and respect a man of coarse and vulgar habits, whose pleasures are drinking, smoking, and noisy racket;—who is

fond of brutal sports;—neglectful not only of his own mental and moral improvement, but of the comforts of his home, and the true welfare of his family;—whose only learning consists in the knowledge of a variety of oaths, the strength of intoxicating liquors, a few ribald or foolish songs, or the names and prowess of certain human and canine fighters? It is impossible. If we seek one to honor and to love as human beings ought to be loved and honored, we must turn to one who fills a higher place than this, by seeking to work out the great end of human existence—whose great endeavour is to learn as much of God, of his word and works, as it is possible for one to learn who has to labour with his hands, and earn his bread by the sweat of his brow—who increases the comforts and the pleasures of home by his cares, his smiles, his words of kindness, and deeds of love—who is ever ready to help his neighbours in their distress, to visit them in the time of sickness and sorrow, to strengthen the feeble in virtue, to teach the ignorant, warn the vicious, and lead the erring into the right path. This is the man who, though sometimes laughed at, is really the one we honor.

The pleasures that result from the improvement of the mind, are far more exalted and durable than those that fall to the lot of the neglected; and more than repay for all the labour and pains in working it out. To the cultivated, the world appears in its true character; it is the theatre where God exhibits his glorious works and trains the human soul for its immortal existence. Earth, the very universe itself, vast and boundless as it is, is full of the sublimest wonders. We cannot wander through the fields, gaze upon the sky, watch the fleeting clouds or tiny stars, without feeling our hearts moved and our faith strengthened, through the numerous evidences with which we are surrounded of the power, wisdom, goodness, and stability, of our God and Father.

A rightly educated man sees in every created thing, however common or apparently trivial, wonders and beauties altogether unnoticed by the unlettered. To the one, history reads its

lessons of wisdom, enables him to compare the past with the present, and look to the future with a hopeful eye. To the other, the past is a blank, and the future a cheerless chaos. The one, whether he has books or not, finds sources of thought, pleasure, and instruction, in every thing. The materials of poetry and philosophy are around him; nature's great and glorious volume is ever open courting his attention—ever ready to inform his mind and improve his heart. His mind is constantly rising from the wondrous and material, up to the pure and spiritual. Nature points with a constant and unerring finger to her Creator, to whom our reverence and love are due. To the other, nature opens her stores—she speaks, but in vain. He has no eye to regard her beauties or read her improving lessons; no ear to listen to her reproofs or hear her warning voice. He lives, but often in vain, and has few pleasures other than those common to the brutes or those stained with moral impurities. Such is the difference in the two characters. The one commands and secures our deepest respect, through the usefulness of his life, the purity of his moral character, and the superior training of his mind: the other passes out of existence, and is only remembered for some reckless feat or glaring misdeed. Who are they who stand out in bold relief on the page of history, as the great models of human nature? men whom we are compelled to love and admire though we may not imitate? They are men who have been celebrated for wisdom and goodness, and whose disinterested labours have all tended to raise the standard of moral excellence, to lessen human suffering, or diffuse human happiness. The direction of their efforts, the charm of their lives, sprung from the education of their minds and feelings.

And now let me make myself understood as to what I mean by education. I do not mean, when I use this word, merely reading, writing, and accounts. The education that stops here is defective; it leaves undone the most material part of education; it neglects that which confers the highest dignity on the human character. I allude to the education of the heart, the moral

feelings, the soul. If we are not trained up to the performance of our duties, and instructed in the varied responsibilities we owe to ourselves, to society, and our God, we cannot be in reality well educated beings. A man may be clever at many things, may know several languages, be a good poet, a beautiful painter, a great traveller, or an excellent mechanic, yet, if he possess not goodness of moral character, benevolence of heart, purity of intention, and disinterestedness of mind, he is a poor human being after all. He may be rich, but he will never command our reverence, while he continues impure, selfish and unjust. He may be poor, but he will not be entitled to our respect while he is vicious, dishonest or unkind. The education I speak of is to embrace the whole of the man; his heart and feelings as well as intellect and hands.

Why is vice so prevalent among all classes? It is because the great mass have not been trained to self-respect, to self-control, and to the love and practice of virtue. They have not yet learned that there is something higher—immeasurably higher—than the low and grovelling pleasures of the beer-house, the contentions of combative animals, or the other pursuits of the merely worldly; that there are pleasures more exquisite and enduring than those that result from the mere gratification of the sensual parts of our nature; that the noblest part of man is his mind, his spirit; that the greatest wrong he can inflict on this is to commit mean and sinful actions; and that the greatest degradation he can bring upon it is to neglect it.

But what has knowledge yet to do for the working classes? The same things it has done for the wealthy. It is to raise them in every point of view; to give them nobler views of themselves, a greater degree of self-respect, a higher tone of feeling towards men of their own class; it is to plead their cause and the cause of their children: it is to point out ways of usefulness, and clear the way for improvements, both as regards morals and physical comforts: it is to unfold their duties both to themselves, their

children, their neighbours, and their God; it is to shorten the hours of toil, and open up ways for the progress of the mind towards what is good and heavenly: it is to improve their dwellings, and give them light, air, cheerfulness, and thus promote health: it is to surround them with what is beautiful to the eye and mind, and enable them to preserve all the decencies, and practice all the endearments, of social life: it is to remove all those nuisances and sources of fevers by which they are now surrounded, and give them useful and ornamental gardens in their stead; it is to release their children from too early toil, and from the disgrace and penalties of blackguardism; and in their place give them education and refinement: it is to procure their rights, and teach them to prefer the interests of the general body over their own temporary and individual aggrandizement; it is to convince all who love truth, that wealth and physical enjoyment are not the sole ends of human existence; but that all things are subordinate to the culture of the soul, and the growth and perfection of the higher faculties—that it is our interest to be less grasping after worldly riches, and our duty to prefer and adorn poverty rather than reap the wages of injustice or gather the spoils of wrong doing—that after all, nothing but justice can permanently prosper in this world—and that the blessings of Providence and the pleasures of life, ought to be open to all, as Providence created them for all: it is to open up the words of truth, and convince us that religion is not only a thing to be believed in but acted out—that great and holy as Jesus Christ was, we must imitate him, and walk even as he walked; must be as disinterested, and devoted too, as he, and as ready to sacrifice ourselves for the sake of truth and the triumph of holy principles. All this, knowledge is to do and more, for its influence is not to stop with life. It is not only to promote our happiness here, and help to prepare us for eternity, but to form a great portion of our enjoyment in the other world.

No doubt some amongst the poor will be ready to ask—"How are we to spare the time, and how can we be expected with all our cares, to make much progress in knowledge?" The answer is, we do not expect those who are burdened with a family to do much for themselves; what we do expect is, that they throw no obstacles in the way of their children. We know that extreme poverty, and undue, because exhausting, labour, are unfavourable to the growth both of knowledge and virtue. Our wonder is that virtue and intelligence should flourish among them at all.

This pleasing fact *alone* gives us hope for the future; though it is not to the men of the present generation that we look for any great strides in improvement, but to the young who are just starting in life's career. At present the labourers every where are compelled to spend the greater portion of their time, in toiling for the mere wants of the body; but the day is probably not far distant when such prolonged periods of labour will be unnecessary, because uncalled for; when science in combination with the elements, will perform most of the labours now performed by manual operations.

How can we fulfil the wise intentions of our heavenly Father, who, in imposing the sentence of labour as a punishment on our race, has gifted us with powers which constitute the glory of humanity, and enable us to reverse the sentence, or at least to convert it into a blessing. Mind, that noblest offspring of Deity, that emanation from his own ethereal nature, that spark from the boundless source of light, wisdom, and being, whose powers are vast as creation itself, and whose creations are as wonderful, varied, and mysterious, as the operations of the natural world; whose aspirations after purity, loveliness, and immortality, border on the intensity we may justly ascribe to angelic natures: surely this high power, this priceless gift, this immortal nature, whose well being and happiness are connected with both worlds, and stretch through the boundless ages of eternity, cannot have

been doomed either by the fiat of our God, or by the laws of humanity, to be obscured amidst the conflicts of contending interests, or buried under the accumulations of toil, ignorance or perversity; and this age after age, century after century, and era after era.

The most melancholy circumstance connected with the past, is not so much the physical and political degradation of the common people of the different nations of the earth; it is not that they were slaves, serfs, villains, or warrior puppets, through whose blood, and over whose carcases, kings cleared their way to thrones, and nobles to fame and estates; it is not that they lived in mud hovels, or were clothed in coarse garments, or had few animal pleasures, or only such as their lord allowed at their games, festivals, and saint days: but that their minds were coarse, their moral powers blunted, the higher feelings all but obliterated, and the pleasures of intellectuality, unknown amongst them: it was the awful fact that mind as belonging to the mass was unvalued, and its development undesired: that its nobility, its vastness, its capabilities, its destinies, its aspirations, its duties, its influences on succeeding ages, were either unknown or unacknowledged, and men dropped into eternity loaded with the crimes engendered by ignorance, injustice, and neglect. As history presents a mournful picture of the past, and our own experience makes us painfully acquainted with the errors, wants, and vices of the present, let us ask how society is to be preserved from treading in our steps, and receiving a measure of the punishment justly due to us. How shall we transmit to our posterity an improved state of society, nobler feelings, and more exalted virtues than we already possess? How shall we discharge our duties to those who are to follow us in the inheritance of life, and leave them less of ignorance, less of vice, less of pain, and less of punishment? I answer—by education and training. The power for good is doubtless immense, but the growth of the higher feelings is very slow. Indeed, it is so with all things destined to endure. This truth should teach us that the little we

can do towards the accomplishment of this great work, should be done with all our might, as the night of death is coming when we cannot work. The little we can do even with great means, should teach us humility and steadiness of purpose. It should teach us also to depend more on the desires and earnest efforts of the people for self-improvement. The people themselves must join in the struggle to obtain it—must be made to see the necessity, power, and dignity of knowledge; the penalties, weakness, and disgrace of ignorance—and the impossibility of being freed from their difficulties or raised in the scale of society, without the attainment of knowledge and the practice of virtue.

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the present age, is the vast number of speakers, of institutions, and of means for spreading thought. Yet, with all our increased facilities, with our mighty press which sends forth its myriads of books, our hosts of orators who are continually stirring up the public mind, the multiplicity of churches, chapels, and institutions, which are spread all over our land, ignorance and vice are at present but little subdued. Over the multitude, the millions, they sway a more than leaden sceptre, they punish with more than tyrant's rigour, crush with more than earthquake's power, subdue with more than conqueror's might, and blast with more than lightning's force.

J. G. B.

Birmingham, 30th August, 1853.

My dear A,

I should have written earlier, but was engaged on my Report. Yesterday I read it at the public meeting. Our dear friend, Mr. Bracebridge, came in most unexpectedly. He was welcomed most handsomely, and made a speech in very kind terms as regards myself. He heard only part of my report, being engaged to attend another meeting. At tea we

talked of you and your family with the same kind feeling and interest in your well-doing. The tears came into his eyes as he spoke of our usefulness and the honourable position we have secured for ourselves with his timely and noble assistance. I felt rewarded for all my labours, and thankful that though I have not deserved this kindness, I should so far be followed by the Divine goodness. I have no doubt, my friend, that this is the state of your own mind also. O help me to praise the Lord, "for his mercy endureth for ever."

I am yours as ever,

J. G. B.

Hinckley, 8th September, 1853.

My dear Friend,

We arrived here quite safely. I am sorry to say I have not lost any part of my cold. The country looks really autumnal, and everywhere the ripening grain is falling beneath the sickle or being carried to the stack-yard. At this season the mind of the Christian seems disposed to devout thankfulness to the Giver of all good for the bounties of His hand and the proofs of His providential care. I have thought of you when looking on the silent scenery of my native place; but in the town the moral aspect is very discouraging indeed. I feel it to be a great privilege to be on the side of the improvers of my country, and to advance somewhat the welfare of the immortal beings by whom we are surrounded. I think of deferring my visit to Mr. Bracebridge's, for I am not in a fit state to visit. Accept my warmest acknowledgments and best wishes.

I am yours,

J. G. B.

As in the moral and spiritual life, this faithful disciple of Jesus knew no pause nor rested from his steady onward march, so in the formation of his opinions he went forward continually, seeking and obtaining more light and knowledge. It has been seen by his "Address to his Congregation," that he had arrived at a full appreciation of the doctrine of the Unity of God, which he set forth in so clear and powerful a light as to produce conviction in many a doubting mind. An extract from a letter to a friend will give his own words upon this subject. "To me it appears that the one true and all-important mission of Unitarians is the enunciation and propagandism of the Unity of the Divine Being. All other doctrines should be and are subordinate. The minister should be the leader of the devotions of the congregation and the teacher of practical Christianity. Many, like myself, have carefully examined the Scriptures, and painfully come to conclusions, which appear to be true and essential to our peace and stability of character as Christians. These conclusions are now put on the shelf and properly stowed away; we do not want to be always pulling them about and making a dust which can only blind our eyes and sour our tempers. We wish to cultivate our hearts, our dispositions and minds, by an intimate and hourly communion with God and His Christ. This, you see, does not savour of indifference. The closet is the place to seek for truth by prayer and a diligent perusal of the Scriptures. The fire-side, the appropriate place for the discussion of speculative points of doctrine, and the lecture-room, the place where

they should be enunciated in public. By this means the scattered, divided and antagonistic family of man may be gathered peaceably into the fold of the Good Shepherd. Much of the bigotry of society arises from the fact that we look at each other from a distance and through a hazy atmosphere. A gentleman, out one morning on a moor, saw in the distance a horrible monster which filled him with alarm; as he approached nearer, and obtained a better view, the figure became less and less horrible; this emboldened him to come nearer still, and he found at last it was only his brother John come out to meet him as a brother should. Is there not a moral?"

While himself very gradually and even reluctantly laying aside various opinions on minor points of doctrine which are accounted superstitious and erroneous among the learned and ingenuous, Mr. Brooks fully sympathized with the feeling of those who had invited him to labour for them among the poor in their wish that his ministry should be wholly unsectarian. It was only to those who went to him privately with their doubts and difficulties that he imparted his peculiar opinions, and it was often very pleasing to his mind to find intelligent, thinking men who from the mere perusal of the Scriptures had arrived at conclusions more in accordance with the Word of God than those which prevail among the orthodox. His pulpit services were eminently practical and scriptural; he could not rest till he had awakened the slumbering conscience of the sinner, he did not allow him to remain in false security, or to imagine that mercy would be shewn except to the truly penitent. To the young, he would

appeal in tones of paternal tenderness, to avoid the temptations of the world, and to enter the strait and narrow road that leadeth unto life. The mourner found true comfort in the pastor's words of consolation; and it will be remembered by all who heard him how in a funeral sermon, which he preached only a month before his death, he laid aside what he had written for the occasion, and burst into the most eloquent and animated description of Heaven, which made the bereaved rejoice for the beloved departed, and which served when the preacher himself was called to his home to fill the hearts of his humble flock with delightful thoughts of his glory and blessedness.

Within two months of his decease, he thus wrote to his brother-in-law:—

Birmingham, 10th December, 1853.

My dear John,

It is a long time since I wrote to you, and I have no doubt you wonder how it is. The fact is I have paid of late more attention to the composition of my sermons than I ever did before, and am much encouraged in the work. We have never had so numerous, regular, or attentive a congregation as we have now. I believe that good to souls is being done, for there is great earnestness and seriousness, which is very pleasing to behold. I am desirous to succeed, not from a spirit of vain-glory, but from a sincere desire to be an apostolic missionary;—a workman that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. If grace and spirit be given me I shall do good to souls. I feel in earnest myself on the subject of salvation, and trust my name is written in heaven. I find written sermons more useful to the people than extempore ones, though not so

exciting. The impressions endure more, there is greater variety. The appeals can be more carefully prepared, and more Scriptural knowledge imparted to the hearers. Really able and diligent preachers do not want an audience, or preach long to empty pews, thin congregations or sleepy worldly professors. I am sure that people hunger and thirst after the living streams *now* as of old, when given sparkling from the river of God. I am far from well just now.

Yours very truly,

J. G. B.

In reviewing what has been written, it is impossible not to feel that the portraiture of our valued friend is very imperfect. In one of his early letters he expressed his anxious desire to re-produce the life of Christ upon earth, and this seems to have been to his last hour his prevailing wish and earnest effort. His resemblance to his beloved Lord and Master was remarked by many, and those who knew him most intimately were most impressed with the feeling that this highest standard of human excellence was continually present as his model.

Conscious of unwearied efforts to benefit his fellow-creatures, he was extremely sensitive respecting anything that marred or hindered his work, and in one or two instances he was deeply pained by the ingratitude of those whom he had greatly benefitted and assisted. Yet so forgiving was his disposition, that unworthy as they were, he could not rest until he had expressed his willingness to pardon. Notwith-

standing the remonstrance of friends who feared that no signs of repentance had been shewn, this follower of Jesus sought out the offenders and held out to them the right hand of forgiveness, praying that God would soften their hearts and bring them to the footstool of mercy. This was not the weakness of a superficial observer but the divine Spirit of Christian love which could not endure the burden of even seeming enmity. Such a spirit is not inconsistent with the strongest abhorrence of sin—the most lively indignation at the sight of guilt. I have seldom seen Mr. Brooks look more angry than when real iniquity has been spoken of with calmness or indifference.

He never seemed to lose sight of the uncertain tenure by which he held his existence, yet not the slightest gloom accompanied any reference to this uncertainty; after every attack of illness he made fresh resolutions to increase his efforts to do good while life continued. The simple expression, "If I am spared" accompanied every promise. It has been remarked that he was grateful to his friends; I think his feeling was more one of sympathy than of gratitude. The favours he sought were for others not himself, and he loved all who granted them as persons who shared his labours and forwarded the great work for which he lived. He was accustomed to own the hand of God in everything, and most of all in the supply of power and opportunity for carrying out the benevolent designs which he continually revolved in his mind, and which no amount of wealth or of bodily strength could exhaust.

For more than nine years had Mr. Brooks laboured in the ministry with a zeal and power which astonished all who knew that consumption had been making progress during each attack of illness. The chief difference appeared in the increased pain that walking occasioned to the lungs. Scarcely more than a week had he been confined to the house by difficulty of breathing; his medical friend had found it necessary to restrain his anxious desire to be engaged in his usual work. He amused himself with preparing for lectures on Egypt, which he had consented to deliver before the young men connected with the Old Meeting Sunday Schools. In some respects he seemed better, and as he had so often recovered from colds which appeared more severe, no immediate apprehension was felt respecting him. He partook of a frugal meal with his family as usual on the 30th of January, and had not returned to his study when suddenly the bursting of one of the larger blood vessels of the lungs deprived him of life, and without time to bid adieu to his beloved relatives he was released from all suffering and the burden of his fleshly tabernacle. It seemed as if a voice had whispered to him, "Enough hast thou laboured and endured; thou hast fought a good fight; thou hast finished thy course; there is laid up for thee a crown of glory that fadeth not away." And when looking on that beautiful countenance in the sublime repose of death, none could doubt that a fine intellect and an exalted piety had contributed to the moulding of the features and their heavenly expression. The heart of the affectionate friend and relative was comforted, and while tears of

fond remembrance were demanded by the sense of loneliness and separation, gratitude for so precious a gift and so peaceful a release rose superior to the voice of lamentation, and the most afflicted were yet able to exclaim "Thy will, O God, not mine be done." This feeling however of entire acquiescence in the will of God, and even thankfulness that the trials of our beloved friend were over, did not silence the voice of nature. In endeavouring to perform our accustomed duties, did we not find that our strength had departed, that the step was buoyant no longer and the hands refused to accomplish their task? Did we not assemble at the hour of prayer and find no utterance but for weeping? The friend, the husband, the pastor had left us. We felt alone in the world. Each spot where he had met us recalled his presence: it was here he spoke those words of tenderness which touched the heart and drew it to himself and raised it above sin and sorrow: it was here he sat by the couch of sickness, and prayed with the dying, whose passage to the tomb he had softened. Had he not told us that he was weak and could not remain long among us? but we did not believe we should lose him yet. Then followed the solemn hour when all that was mortal of him we loved was conveyed to its appointed resting-place. The friends of the Mission paid their tribute of deep respect in every arrangement connected with the funeral. The pulpit at Lawrence-street, from which so often the voice of the departed had sounded in accents of warning or encouragement, was occupied by his friend, Mr. Bache, who with solemn earnestness and tenderness commended the

pastor who had gone to his rest to the faithful remembrance of his grateful and mourning people. Love and reverence for so good a man were expressed with a warmth and sincerity that awakened an echo in every bosom. The concourse of people, old and young, rich and poor, who filled the Chapel, attended the procession to the cemetery; and the great ones of earth might in vain desire to have tears of such tender affection shed over their graves. On the following Sunday, Mr. Bache preached two funeral sermons; one at the New Meeting-house, from Matthew xxv. 21,—"Well done good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—the other at Lawrence-street Chapel, from Daniel xii. 3,—"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." The selection of such texts proves the estimation in which the departed was held; and it was no small consolation to the hearts of a sorrowing people to know that their best friend was valued by one who could so justly appreciate his worth.

At the first meeting of Sunday-school teachers, which took place after the loss of their best earthly friend, it was proposed to erect a marble tablet to his memory; and the children of the schools as well as the congregation generally were anxious to be allowed to contribute according to their ability towards this last token of respect. A simple slab of marble has been placed in the chapel at Lawrence-street, bearing the following inscription:—

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED
BY A GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE PEOPLE
TO RECORD THE NAME OF

JOHN GENT BROOKS,

FOR NINE YEARS THE FAITHFUL MINISTER TO THE POOR
BY APPOINTMENT OF
THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY ASSEMBLING IN THE
NEW MEETING-HOUSE.
HE OPENED THIS CHAPEL 6TH AUGUST, 1848.
HE EXCHANGED THE MORTAL FOR THE IMMORTAL LIFE
30TH JANUARY, 1854.
"THEY THAT BE WISE
SHALL SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE
FIRMAMENT
AND THEY THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS
AS THE STARS
FOR EVER AND EVER."

The following Letter from Charles Holte Bracebridge, Esq. to the Editor, in kind compliance with a request that he would here record his impressions of the character of Mr. Brooks, will be read with peculiar interest, and forms a very appropriate conclusion to this brief Memoir.

Some business having taken me to the Union House, Nuneaton, about the month of October, 1842, I found on the Board-room table a sheet of foolscap paper, written on two sides. It was the only paper on the table; and supposing it some new Poor Law order, I enquired, and took it up; Mr. Law, the master of the workhouse and subsequently clerk to the

Union,* replied that there were not less than three hundred men in the workhouse yard breaking stone; for the great distress in the Union had made such a test necessary; and that the men, considering some injustice was done them in the measuring the stone and the apportioning the work to their respective powers, had met and memorialized the Board. The paper was well drawn up and admirably expressed, and the request seemed most reasonable; in fact, was merely that the necessary labour-test should be justly applied. Mr. Law observing my admiration of this paper, said "The man who wrote it is in my office copying for me, which is indeed his labour, for he is incapable of any other." I went to find him: a tall, thin, very pallid man stood before me with a calm intelligent blue eye, prominent nose and marked features. I have seen such a countenance among the fair Jews of Eastern Europe, and painters draw such features beneath the helmet of a dying Crusader:—a beard and moustache would have transformed it readily into that of a Paladin; a cowl or mantle into the Italian ideal of the loved Apostle John:—yet nevertheless the man before me was a simple poor man, somewhat bent in shoulder and knee, dressed in a suit of grey workhouse clothing; and the peculiar quietness of his manner would rather have prevented any particular notice had he been standing among the many brought to that place for the same cause. In his case a second evil was added to poverty, viz. sickness. He seemed about 26 or 28, and was evidently threatened with consumption. He gave me gentle and somewhat curt answers to my questions, and when asked about his powers of composition, fetched two or three printed letters from a Leicester paper on subjects connected with the stocking trade. On a second visit and further enquiry of Mr. Law, I found that John Brooks was a young man of a respectable stocking weaver's family, and one of a few who had been incessantly engaged in

* An office he still holds with great honour to himself and advantage to the public, being a most humane, intelligent, and active public servant.

the work of self-education; that he was a member of a Baptist congregation, and gave many of his Sunday hours to school teaching: that he also devoted time in the evenings to the instruction and encouragement of the members of a small Mechanics' Institute who were less advanced than himself: and that he had injured his health by assiduous study in the night after twelve or even fourteen hours' work at the stocking-loom, a labour at that time most inadequately remunerated. Brooks's mind it appeared not only sought knowledge for its own sake, but his strong benevolent feelings urged him immediately to seek to make use of his powers for the benefit of his poorer brethren. He therefore wrote in the Leicester papers on any subject which offered an opening to argument and to sentiment as applied to the trade of Hinckley. These letters were admirably expressed and correctly written, and gave evidence of careful reflection rather than sudden impulse. I subsequently found that he had not long before adopted Chartist views, to which he was evidently driven by motives of humanity, and despair (not indeed surprising) of any measures of relief to the hand-loom weavers. His intercourse with the Chartists led to the discovery that a section of them were prepared to carry out their doctrines by physical force (which long afterwards became known to the public.) After many arguments with a famous Chartist of Leicester, (tried two years afterwards and convicted) and others, in which his moral and religious arguments failed to convince men whose motives he found to be selfish, Brooks left the Chartists in despair of any amelioration of the fortunes of the lower classes by Chartist help. Some months afterwards, the physical-force men broke out into violence; the Leicestershire Yeomanry were called out, and a regular fight took place in Leicester. Within a few days of this, when there was neither Yeomanry, Constabulary nor any kind of town government at Hinckley, (not even a magistrate to be found near it) this Leicester Chartist, with a select

party, came to the town with the professed object of enrolling partizans and getting up a simultaneous movement at Leicester and Hinckley. He had well chosen his time, for half the people were out of work, and the rest receiving very low wages: the masters felt conscious of having little influence, and the inhabitants, in despair of any means of organizing resistance, expecting the intended plunder of shops and other results of the Chartists' eloquence upon willing listeners, bethought themselves at last of the workhouse Master as their best adviser. He gave them no encouragement as to the temper of the people; and could neither suggest any means of repelling the enemy by force or persuasion. Of the leading inhabitants, none came forward. Neither Constable, Clergyman, nor Catholic Priest, nor Dissenting Minister was thought a match for the Chartist in this encounter. At last, Mr. Law said, "There is one young man in the workhouse who has great influence with the working classes. He knows the Chartists' plans and principles, and he is not afraid of giving publicity to his convictions, if he can be persuaded it will do any good." No time was to be lost. The demagogue had already collected a crowd and begun his address. John Brooks consented to do his best. He listened quietly for some time and was then called for. His pale cheek, flushed with emotion, and his somewhat bashful manner, gave but doubtful indications of success; but the rude, half-starved and irritated weavers enforced silence and gathered eagerly round the table or tub on which he was mounted. Cicero could not have produced a greater effect against Catiline, than did the poor sickly weaver from the workhouse against the demagogue. The men knew he was their real friend; that his life was in the right, whatever were his opinions; and they esteemed him not only clever, and (compared to them,) learned, but perfectly cognizant of their interests and wrongs. Moreover they felt that he was one who had suffered and who was prepared to suffer. Gradually the strong impression the Chartist had produced wore off; the vivid picture he had drawn of grievances

and the necessity for immediate redress with a general recognition of the working-man's rights, whatever it might cost, began to fade; John Brooks's calm reasoning, Christian sentiments, and practical view of right and wrong prevailed: he had clothed his ideas in good language and adapted them to the audience; they had known him from a child, the Chartist was a stranger. The result was that the crowd by degrees left the Chartist and came round Brooks; those of Hinckley who had at first joined the Leicester men slunk away one after another, the Chartist orator and the strangers returned crest-fallen, the peace of the town was secured, and all thoughts of riot abandoned. John Brooks returned to the workhouse. The inhabitants of Hinckley best know whether he ever received any thanks for the great benefit he had conferred on their town. Now that they have prospered ten years in peace and prosperity, they have the more cause to recollect that Mr. Brooks's wife and children are unprovided for; and that he, from that hour to the day of his death, never ceased to learn what was the work Providence had given him to do and *to do it* to the best of his power, not as a man-pleaser, but as before God.

It was evident on more acquaintance that Brooks could not live as mental labourer and handicraft man; his constitution forbad it, yet his intellect required food as much as his body, and the hands and the thoughts were both at work together. It seemed also probable that he would become a most useful agent in instructing others if he could learn the common forms necessary for imparting knowledge. Several schemes were thought of, and among them a two years' training at Battersea School, then lately established for school-masters, by Dr. Kay, (now Sir Kay Shuttleworth;) but the rules of this establishment forbad the admission of a student who had been brought up beyond the pale of the Church of England. Brooks was not tempted by the inquiry whether he could conform to church services in the Establishment, which he probably would have done; for his religion was one of love and earnestness rather than one of

dogmas and of forms. He was not then, probably never, a great stickler for doctrinal differences, which in his mind sank before the great work of bringing men to God which his benevolent mind seemed by intuition to have adopted as his proper and peculiar business in life. Battersea School lost in him one who would have done honour to it, and to the profession of schoolmasters. His case was made known to one who never closed an ear to poverty seeking for independence by honest exertion, and intellectual advancement by earnest study. Brooks's sole object was the means of imparting to others the truths he sought for himself, and the raising at least some of his own class in the social scale by convincing them that moral conduct based on religious principle, and perseverance in the pursuit of intellectual improvement, could alone add to their happiness, and gain the respect of their more influential countrymen. With these views and feelings, he bade adieu to Hinckley, with no other ambition than to become a school-master and teacher of the poor, and he was promised support in his attempt,—more he would scarcely have accepted; but before he left, another accident occurred which brought him before the public. A Government Commissioner was sent to inquire into the condition of the Stocking-frame workers of Leicestershire. On arriving at Hinckley he inquired who could inform him as to the questions at issue between masters and workmen, the particulars of the trade, and the proper parties to be brought before him for examination. Brooks was at once designated by every one for this office and sent for. He became in fact the Commissioner's secretary, but he was still unable to work in the frame and an inmate of the workhouse. He was requested to change the dress of the House for his own Sunday suit; but this he positively refused: he would not appear superior to what he was; he felt no disgrace in a misfortune induced only by ill health; and in this dress he fulfilled with approbation all the duties required of him.

The mode Mr. Brooks's friends took for forwarding his views, was by sending him to study in two industrial and pay schools

where horticulture forms a portion of the system. At Newbold near Bosworth, he found Mr. Brown, then master of Lady Byron's school, a man whose benevolent mind well coincided with his own; and after some residence there, he removed to a school on the same principle at Ealing, also established and maintained by Lady Byron. Both these schools are free to members of all sects on a small payment (very inadequate to their cost,) and in other respects a good religious and general education is given. At the Grove, Ealing, near London, Mr. Brooks remained for a year, during which his health improved under the kind care and skilful treatment of Dr. Bruce Jones.

The worthy master of Ealing school (who has now a school of his own in the same village,) writes thus after stating that he was there in 1842—43:—"From what I can recollect of his expressions while at the Grove," writes Mr. Atlee, "I feel assured that he has died in the work most congenial to his feelings. He often intimated a wish that should the Almighty be pleased to spare his life (which seemed then precarious), he might be placed in a position where he could be the means of improving the moral and social condition of his poor and almost destitute fellow-labourers; their interest and welfare seemed to be the ruling thought of poor John Brooks's mind. From what I have heard of him, I think his wish has been literally fulfilled. Yet though he had acquired a full knowledge of the system of these admirable schools of Lady Byron, his health did not admit of his taking a regular school himself. He went to Kirkby Mallory and spent some little time between the school at Newbold and that village, in lecturing and instructing the young men of the village in the evenings. After a few months, Mr. Johns of Liverpool came to Birmingham on a special mission connected with the working classes, when Brooks was made known to him; and thence arose his recommendation to the Committee who appointed him visiter to the poor in 1844.

I should have mentioned that while at Ealing, Brooks was called to Town to give evidence before the Committee of the

House of Commons on the Hosiery trade. His valuable evidence, as one of the best conducted and trustworthy of the working men, was listened to with great attention, and given with perfect self-possession, earnestness and acuteness. I myself observed the respect with which he was treated.

At the Conferences on Juvenile Delinquency at Birmingham in 1851 and 1853, Brooks again appeared before the public, introduced by the Recorder of Birmingham, who had long before recognized his worth. These speeches appear in the Conference Reports. Probably on no occasion could he have found himself amidst so many of the true friends to his great object in life—the moral elevation of the working classes. I believe there was not one of them, however high his station and long his labours, who did not consider him a worthy member of their fraternity.

Of Mr. Brooks's career while visitor and subsequently Minister to the Poor at Birmingham, of his persevering charity, intelligent exhortations, his thorough knowledge of the habits and feelings of the hard-working, the idle, the destitute and the miserable, and of his power of communicating between rich and poor so as to soften the prejudices of both, it does not become me to speak. The nine Reports he wrote in as many successive years are the best testimony, and the schools and reading rooms, savings' clubs, &c. are the best witnesses; as the feelings of the Committee for him are the best commentary on his labours.

His favourite project, Homes for young Females of the Working Classes, which he thought the best means of checking corrupting influences among dense manufacturing populations, has not yet been accomplished at Birmingham, but I trust is on the eve of being so.

The more interesting anecdotes, the statistics of improvement, the sound philosophy and merciful Christianity of Mr. Brooks's reasonings, warnings and reflections in the Reports, will not, I am sure, be allowed to lie hidden in them. Though not connected with the Committee of the New Meeting Ministry to the Poor, I was present on the presentation of Mr. Brooks's last

Report, August 29, 1853, and by courtesy allowed to move "that it should be received and printed." It is now a pleasing reflection that I should have been permitted to give this testimony of my belief in the value of Mr. Brooks's labours of love after eleven years acquaintance with him, commenced by an apparent accident which led to the providential circumstances of his most useful career. Our acquaintance was on his side begun in the summer of 1842 in a judicious appeal for justice for the poor, and ended in November 18th, 1853 in a note of thanks for a trifling compliment and a request for the poor for some Hospital Out Tickets (which he had had in former years;) so that my long recollections of him are of one always labouring in his vocation; and I may add that in that long period, no one incident occurred to disturb the respect and regard I had for him as for one acting up to his own convictions with manly determination, Christian fortitude, and a gentleness and self-denial which seemed to scorn self indulgence, ambition and worldly-mindedness in any or all of their seductive forms.

C. HOLTE BRACEBRIDGE.

The following Tribute to the Memory of his Friend, appeared in a Leicester newspaper soon after his decease, from the pen of an esteemed Fellow-labourer.

The sobbing rain and wind-torn tree,
The flowerless paths and hooded sky,
Mourn for the year, and mourn with me,
That, like the year, our loved ones die.

The year shall spread anew its bloom,
And light and love and joy restore;
But they who leave us for the tomb
Return no more,—Oh, never more!

And fast as time shakes down the sand,
Death calls our dearer ones away,
Till lonely on life's waste we stand,
Like some old tree or ruin grey.

Thy name had been upon my thought,
And hopes and memories of far years;
But morn the fatal tidings brought,
And hopes and memories sink in tears.

I turn me where we last walked out
To muse on man and Heaven's high will;
And mourn to know that thou art not;
For faith and hope were with thee still.

How oft we prayed that Fatherland
With Heaven's own glory great might be;
And the pale toiler soon might stand,
By love and truth and knowledge free.

In loathsome courts and breathless rooms,
Where want lurks, nursing early crime;
Where morn's glad sun-shine never comes,
Nor tells the gale of summer time;

There didst thou toil from day to day,
Heedless of fame, to bless the poor;
Till sickness smiled, want fled away,
And guilt repentant hoped once more.

Thou knews't with pity to relieve,
Their cares and fears had all been thine;
And when the mild rebuke to give,
And when to pour the "oil and wine."

By lonely hearth, and dying bed,
Where pain, remorse, and death implore,
How many tears shall now be shed,
For they shall "see thy face no more."

Upon thy path, along thy track,
Where darkness scowled and misery frowned,
As heaven's own glory gilds the rack,
Pure light, and love and peace abound.

But Heaven hath called its own again,
Too soon for us, but not for thee;
Thy spirit hath escaped from pain,
To realize eternity.

And if our sighs may soothe thy rest,
If tears keep green death's narrow mound;
The daisy will be on thy breast,
And gentlest prayers be breathed around.

For, led by evening's dewy star,
Our frequent steps shall thither bend,
And mingling voices fill the air,
"Here sleeps the poor man's guide and friend."

J. DARE.

5th February, 1854.

The following Extracts from Mr. Brooks's nine Annual Reports, which he presented to the Subscribers to his Mission, will give some idea of his labours, and of his principles and opinions in connexion with this valuable work.

Extracts from First Report, 1845.

Many have been trained from childhood to look to mendicancy and pilfering for subsistence, to consider labour as a hardship, and idleness as a luxury: hence their determined repugnance to the one and their love of the other. I have met with children now in this course of training; they are driven out to beg or

pilfer, while their parents are either at home in idleness or rioting in the unholy gains of these juveniles in crime. A few days since a mother was asked if she would give up her little daughter to be properly trained by a kind lady: she said "No; she is my sole dependence; I have nothing to live on but what she begs." The child will therefore be brought up a mendicant, and will probably be the mother of a family of mendicants. The more I see of professional mendicancy, the more I dislike it. It is a fearful evil which cannot be checked, until the benevolent make it a rule, before they relieve, to trace the mendicant to his home, and watch over his habits. All cannot do this it is true, nor is it necessary; the Ministry to the Poor will do it for them if they choose to employ it.

Let no one imagine that the mendicant is to be passed by, or that there are no deserving objects among them. Few as these objects are, they ought to be searched out in the spirit of the Saviour, for He came 'to seek and to save those that are lost.' Besides, it is our duty to try to fathom the depths of human misery; to trace effects to their causes, with a view either to their entire removal, or at least to their mitigation. The evils of which we complain, and which we deplore, are not inflicted by chance; they spring from the infringement of one of nature's sternest, best of laws, the law of sociality, mutual dependence, and mutual care. What do we know of this people yet? What has been done with a view to restoring them to the place in society they have lost, or to guiding them to the good they have missed? Their children are like other children, and have as much in them that is good and amiable; and it takes years to root out these good dispositions; they must be beaten and exposed, hungered and weary, led from door to door, and made to stand by the way side; they must be taught and encouraged to steal, and even be reasoned into the belief that it is right for the hungry to steal, or that it is at least only a trifling sin; they must be rewarded when they act cleverly, and be taunted and abused when they fail; and lastly, they must be reared in

ignorance of God, of duty, of religion, and of the true structure of society: when all this has been done, then we find them the hardened characters who pester our streets and fill up our criminal lists. Let not the wealthy flatter themselves that they gain by the neglect of these outcasts: they have not only to maintain them as beggars, but as paupers when sick, and as prisoners and convicts when their depredations are brought to light: in every condition they are a dead weight on society, and on every hand spread their corrupting influence as a just punishment for our neglect, and for our want of Christian love. The children of the wealthy do not always escape their contaminating influence; like a fever, it cannot be confined to the locality whence the malaria arises; no home is secure from it, for it finds its way into the most unlooked-for places, by a thousand unexpected means.

If my voice were strong enough I would say to every denomination of professing Christians, "Here are the true objects of Christian charity, here are the perishing heathens of Britain; here are those who not only practice sin, but initiate others into its mysteries, and bind them to its service; here are they who people our jails, our convict ships, and supply our streets with sturdy mendicants; for the bold and dexterous among them become thieves, and the timid and unenterprising, beggars. O! pass them not by; leave them not to perish; direct your energies, your talents, and your money to this noble purpose; lessen not your efforts for the heathen in distant lands, but O neglect not those of your own." In some churches, the children in the Sunday Schools are encouraged to contribute towards the support and education of orphan or abandoned heathen children. Might we not imitate this benevolent example, for the support and education of our own little heathens, the orphans and the abandoned of England; whose souls are more surely perishing than are those of the heathen abroad? We do, and must maintain them either as criminals or beggars; is it not better to address ourselves to the evil at once, and maintain them properly

till they are educated, taught good habits, and enabled to earn their own livelihood? The latter is decidedly the most Christian course. Let it not be said we have not the means: if this is the fact there is no sin in their abandonment; but do we make use of all the means in our power? What are the sacrifices we make? Do we debar ourselves of one luxury or one comfort for the sake of the needy? If we do not, we fail in Christian duty. It is not enough to employ a Minister; he must also be enabled to do all which they who employ him would do if they came into individual contact with these evils.

The Girls' School has proved even more successful than the Boys' School, and is by far the more important of the two. No heavier calamity can befall a land than that brought on by a host of untidy, vicious and ignorant mothers; as the mother is, so must we expect the daughter to be. It is thus that misery, vice, and filth are transmitted from age to age, as a bitter perpetual legacy. Improve the mothers, and you improve the race, for they are the first and most effective instructors of youth. It is a fallacy to call the depraved untrained; no one in this country can be so; if we withhold from the children of any class good instruction, care, and the right direction of the mind and habits, they will find those who will thrust upon them bad instruction, use bad influences, and bring them up successfully in evil habits and crime. No one can deny that our mendicants, unfortunates, and thieves, are well trained to their several vocations; how important then, that our females should be well instructed in all that belongs to the duties of women and mothers. Can it be expected that the labourer or artizan should prefer to spend his evenings, holidays and sabbaths in the bosom of a filthy family, whose rags and discomfort are a standing disgrace, as well as annoyance? Is it not likely that he will grow weary and indifferent to home, and at last be tempted to spend as much of his time as possible away from it? Many mothers do not know how to keep a house tidy, are quite incompetent to mend the clothes, to make up good and cheap dishes, to practice

a wise economy of their little earnings, or to do many other little things, which add so much to the comfort of a family. In one of the lodging-houses I had some serious conversation with a blind man, and afterwards gave him, as I thought, sixpence. I passed on, and half an hour intervened: in coming out of another house, I was surprised to find the keeper of the lodging-house waiting for me; he asked me if I knew what I had given the blind man; I told him sixpence; when he tendered the half-sovereign which I had given by mistake. I was glad to find so much honesty in so unlikely a place, and when there was such an opportunity of defrauding without fear of detection. In general, however, I fear our lodging-houses are *now* to mendicity and its vices, what gaols *were* to crime—most efficient seminaries.

Extracts from Second Report, 1846.

In the afternoon, soon after the commencement of our religious service, and whilst I was at prayer, a drunken host burst forth from their drinking, gambling den, to wind up their orgies with a fight. Scores of men and women rushed forth from the courts and houses around, shouting at the top of their voices, and breathing the most horrible threatenings possible. I gave out the hymn as quickly as I could. As the sound of peaceful worship arose, it seemed to produce a good effect, by raising a feeling of shame in the minds of the brawlers; for, before we had finished, several had joined our little party, the noise had entirely ceased, and the mob was scattered. I might multiply instances; but these are sufficient to show our great difficulties and the importance of these schools in such localities. Still I most strongly object to their receiving the degrading name of 'Ragged,' though this is now becoming so fashionable. Brand these children as Pariahs, accustom them to the name, and the great danger is, that as such they will always be content to remain; they are too low already, and we ought not to multiply

difficulties in the way of their self-elevation. If we do our duty to them the children will improve, and become fitting objects of our Christian sympathy and aid. We must enquire into their circumstances and wants—we must treasure up for them their little savings, and supply necessaries to those who need and cannot save; we must, as far as possible, bring them in contact with higher classes than their own, accustom them to more improving influence, and thus destroy the isolated feelings and habits which mark them as a separate and despised caste. When this is done, the character of the school is changed, and consequently the name becomes a degrading misnomer. Being anxious that my children should have the means of buying shoes and other articles of wearing apparel, a Savings' Fund was introduced; their little savings are gathered up every Sunday morning, and whatever may be the amount, they receive the addition of a third. By this plan, eight have already been supplied with shoes.

From experience I have found it next to useless to address these ignorant and vicious little beings in a formal religious style; their minds are not yet sufficiently enlightened, and the greatest care is required not to raise a feeling of contempt, in addition to their present indifference for all that is holy and solemnly important. They cannot be preached into goodness, but must be slowly and almost imperceptibly trained to it. No amount of scriptural texts crammed into their minds by countless repetitions will ever make them practical Christians. There is but one way; and that is patient perseverance in rational instruction: they may be drilled to mechanical movements, but their minds cannot be drilled into a love for Christian truth, or submission to God's law.

During my visit to London, last April, I paid a visit, in company with others, to one of the Ragged Schools, and there the above thoughts were more deeply impressed on my mind. I was surprised to find the police in attendance to preserve order *among the* pupils; thus giving the strongest assurance that the

teachers felt little or no confidence in their scholars; but little love and no respect. How is it possible that love can exist without confidence on both sides? And how is it to be expected that moral power, the true element of success, in these and all other schools, should exert its true influence when allied in such close union with the constable's staff? I could not help contrasting the singular disorder and want of respect with our own orderly and busy school. One great secret is to keep all fully employed, and to have timely changes of lessons: not to talk at them so much as to teach them quietly. The best lessons on important subjects, especially religion, can be given unobtrusively in the reading lessons; it is then done without noise, and is directed to the particular scholar whose conduct, answer, or ignorance may call it forth, and you can ensure his not only listening to it, but rightly understanding it. Experience has proved that the best way to impress their minds with religious truth and human duty is to weave the instruction into a simple narrative or story; the various incidents, if well managed, serve effectually to keep up the interest, and enable them to see how religion and duty may be rendered practicable in real every-day life. This has been our practice from the first, and has been attended with complete success: the order is always good when the story is being read, and I have constant evidence afforded me, in my visits to the various families, that these stories are well remembered even by the youngest, and are told with interest to those at home. At the close of the reading of an interesting book, many questions are sure to be asked, as to whether it is to be put into the library, and as to whether they can have it. Some little time since an interesting conversation took place in the library-room between two little girls, who were both enquiring for one of these books. One said to the other—'Do you read all the books you take out?' 'No,' was the answer, 'but we all get round the fire, and my mother reads them to us, instead of letting us run about the streets.'

'Well, we don't do so,' said the first little girl: 'Our Ruth reads, while me and my mother work.'

I have found the black board one of the most efficient instruments in teaching the alphabet, and at the same time the most pleasant: by this the attention of the whole class can be kept engaged as long as it can be done with pleasure to themselves. Object lessons, for the more advanced scholars, have been found of great utility; and here let me ask the assistance of all our friends who may be able to aid us, by presenting for this purpose, specimens of the different products of the earth, minerals, curiosities, prints, &c. The attention of this class cannot be kept up for any great length of time: they require frequent change; with us one half-hour is devoted to reading and spelling, another to writing and arithmetic, and the last half-hour to moral story, singing, and prayer.

The good produced by these Schools is not confined to the youth, but enables the missionary to bring the adults more under his own immediate instruction. Many who at first would resolutely refuse to enter a place of worship, have no hesitation in attending the Evening School. Since the formation of our School, I have succeeded in inducing six young men to become teachers, who would not under other circumstances have attended any place of public worship on the Sabbath: four of these are very regular as teachers in our Sunday School also, and are attendants at the evening service.

The Instruction Society has Classes for adults on four evenings of the week; two for males and two for females; and free Lectures in the winter on such subjects as are considered to be useful and agreeable to the poor. When it is considered that a large proportion of the inhabitants of a town like this, is composed of young unmarried men, living in lodgings where they do not feel they are welcome to spend the whole of their spare time, and to whom the streets or beer-houses were alone open, the desirableness of such an Institution is at once apparent. For the most trifling sum weekly, they have a comfortable room

well supplied with agreeable company, and abundant reading, to which they can always have ready and welcome access.

When we consider the great efforts that are now made to render attendance at the ale-house both agreeable and fascinating, that in many of these places musicians and singers are engaged, and the popular compositions performed and interspersed with all that is lewd and demoralizing, that other persons are kept to give effect to their songs and recitations by theatrical representations, and in many the pleasures of the dance are provided, attended by all the evils of promiscuous assemblage with the most debased of both sexes, it then becomes a duty on the part of the virtuous and the wealthy, to endeavour to lessen these evils, by joining the pleasures of music and sociality with temperance and knowledge. Many a man has fallen from his temperance pledge to revel again in drunkenness and vice, because no means for innocent recreations and improving pleasures were placed within his reach; his time has hung heavily on his hands, his associates in the work-shops are either still in the ranks of drunkenness, or at as great a loss for innocent pleasures as himself; if the former, he is either the butt for their witticisms, or the subject of their practical jokes; if the latter, in a moment of *ennui*, he is subject to be drawn again for relief to the pleasures and excitements of the cup and the socialities he formerly enjoyed. Drunkenness is the monster evil of the time; by this the beggar drowns the recollection of his degradation, his sins and his miseries; to this the abandoned woman flies for forgetfulness of her fall, to blot out for a little time the memory of her wrongs, the pains of disease and the hopelessness and pitilessness of her condition; by this are the passions of the ignorant and the wicked inflamed, and the peace of families destroyed; for this the education and support and care of the young are sacrificed, and children driven out to beg and steal; in this the thief and the murderer spend their ill-gotten booty, hide the sense of shame, and stifle for a time the stings of conscience. What is spent in this degrading vice is a direct loss to the

country; it is loss of wealth, of honour, of health, of skill, of independence, and of virtue and religion. Every thing that can be done to stay this evil, or lessen the temptations that at present exist, ought to be done, and done speedily. Every day I see its evils and am made to feel the difficulties that stand in the way of reclaiming the ignorant and confirmed drunkard.

Another great evil of the day is the non-connection of such great numbers of our population with the religious societies of the country. I have no hesitation in saying, that in this town there are thousands who own no regular connection with our places of worship, nor acknowledge any man as their pastor. Without social worship, man makes but little progress in religion; he needs assistance and instruction, and if this religious want is so deeply felt amongst the educated and refined, how much more is it needed for those whose life is spent in toil, privation and ignorance. From the first I have felt the necessity of gathering my people together for this purpose. Amongst a people so entirely unconnected with religious sects, and ignorant of the first principles of religious belief, many will always prefer, where convenient, the services of the Minister who has devoted most attention to them in their difficulties and their sorrows. This has been my own case; but I saw the necessity of bringing religion to them, not expecting them to come great distances to me. I took a small house in the Gullet, Stafford-street, just in the midst of my district; this place was soon filled to overflowing: we have now taken a much larger house in the same place, and if I am not deceived, the same results will follow. I could not wish for a more attentive congregation; few words, I think, are lost upon them, and of their affection for myself, I cannot complain; it is everything that could be desired. Not a single annoyance has been practised against us by the neighbours, and as a proof of the esteem in which we are held, I may just say, that when it was rumoured a week or two ago, that we were about to remove, the neighbours requested me not to give them up: in fact, they let me know of our present house, before it was vacated, that I might apply in time for it.

I consider our own views as peculiarly adapted to supply the spiritual wants of the poor, though I do not desire to unsettle the mind of any one. On one occasion only have I given a strictly doctrinal sermon, and that was one of self-defence, called for by unjust slanders respecting our belief, and through denials, on the part of the orthodox, of the possibility of people attending our ministry ever going to heaven. The great object with me, is to bring people under the influence of the Christian ministry, generally irrespective of sect, believing as I do that all sects hold, more or less, to the great fundamentals of the Gospel. Those who have been brought up at the parish church, I have induced to attend there again; others, who are strictly orthodox, to attend their own respective chapels; and many catholics have been encouraged to return to the duties of their church, and to union with their own body. So much, however, do my poor people esteem my ministrations, that several who before had not attended anywhere on the Sabbath for years, have during the present week urgently requested me to open the place for service on Wednesday nights.

One thing let me urge on my friends: it is, do not allow yourselves to be victimized by begging-letter impostors. I have not found a single case of real distress among all to whom I have been referred: the money is invariably spent in drunkenness and debauchery. In one street, no less than three lodging-house keepers pursue this lucrative part of the profession, with perfect impunity and success: one of them is very skilled, and possesses dresses for every character he assumes. I have been assured from authentic sources, that his gains are frequently £4., and even sometimes £7. in a day. Many of these characters have been well educated, and in early life enjoyed the comforts and respectability of the middle portion of society, but have fallen through dishonesty, drunkenness, and licentiousness.

Some months since I was surprised by a visit from a man whose case I had given up as hopeless; he had been miserably

poor, a pauper and a tramp, and after exhausting my patience and my hopes, had again wandered I knew not whither. He had now returned, so changed that at first I did not know him; he told me he had remembered my words and admonitions, had settled down to work, had begun attendance on public worship, and felt happy in the enjoyment of religion. He could not rest till he had come to thank me and to request a renewal of my visits. He is still a consistent member of a Christian church; and from inhabiting a close, filthy, ready-furnished room, as he did when I first found him, he has a beautifully clean and well furnished house, his children are comfortable and at school, and he is now laying up a trifle weekly in the Provident Institution.

EXTRACTS FROM THIRD REPORT, 1847.

My Christian Friends,

In laying before you this, my third Report, I do it with great pleasure; for God hath blessed our labours and extended our bounds. Never has the mission been so highly valued in the district as at the present time, and never has it been more needed. The pressure of distress has been very heavy indeed for many weary months, from the dearness of provisions, and the scarcity of employment. My people have been great sufferers in these respects; sickness, as a matter of course, has followed closely in the wake of want; fever and influenza have been common, and frequently fatal; while consumption, that scourge of our island, has made many its victims. In many of these cases, I have every reason to believe that disease was brought on, and in many death was hastened, by sheer want. If the wealthy could only see how much of misery, want, and suffering, there is in a town like this, and how nobly it is often borne by the poor, it would call off their sympathies from the fictitious distresses of the heroes and heroines of the novel and the drama, to those of the realities of private life:

they would find that truth is often stranger than fiction, and that it possesses many advantages over it, inasmuch as it is often in the power of the benevolent to impart comfort and remove distress. But at the same time I must observe that it is not the mere casual bestowment of alms, or an occasional visit to the abodes of wretchedness, that will confer permanent benefit on the class that claims our sympathies. They must be visited until they are known, and we must be careful to awaken desires in their own bosoms for self improvement, if not for reformation. I have seen the evils of casual visits to the poor in disreputable neighbourhoods. Not that I impugn the honourable intentions or benevolent motives of the individuals who have made these visits; for these I give them all praise: but their indiscreet largesses to people whom I have long known to be loose and idle in habit, and unprincipled in mind, yet who had shown some little sign of improvement, have completely put a stop to my influence, by raising undue expectations of pecuniary relief from me, and causing them to estimate an attendance at public worship, and a hypocritical desire to please, at what it will produce in the way of charity.

Without entering into the merits of the question of Governmental Education, I must say that there is great want of school accommodation; and whilst the great mass of artizan children are prevented attending Day Schools beyond the age of nine years, yet there is a great want of Infant and Evening Schools. If we wish to make education a national object, we must not confine our attention to the day school. This I contend will not reach the whole of our youth. We must have more efficient Sunday Schools, and they must be carried into every densely crowded neighbourhood, and to every neglected court. We must have Industrial Schools for the mendicant and criminal portion of the young. In this department of public usefulness and benevolence, I doubt if the voluntary principle is strong enough to grapple with the evil; at all events not without aid from the civil authorities. Many a youth is sent out to beg and

steal, not so much to supply his own necessities, as to minister to the vices of the parent. This important class will not in any great number lay aside their habits for the mere food and education of their children: it will pay them best to neglect School, and they will always attend to their own present interest rather than the future good of the child; whilst a rather superior class, that at present do not depend on charity, will be tempted by the boon offered to the more degraded, and send their children to take the place of the mendicant and thief. In order to fill the Industrial Schools with the class for whom they are designed, juvenile vagrancy must be annihilated. All children found begging in the street, or those known to be of dishonest habits, and found day after day loitering suspiciously about the streets, should be directed or led by the police, as the case may warrant, to the Industrial School, and told that no longer will they be allowed either to beg or assemble for play in the streets. Many a youth is independent of his parents at twelve years of age, and he requires lodging as well as food. If, therefore, the Industrial School cannot, to some extent, afford lodgings to those who are destitute of friends, yet in the way of temptation and ruin, it will be extremely deficient in one of its great requisites in providing means for self-reformation. We do not want a race of well-educated thieves and beggars, but to put an entire stop to their degrading and immoral occupation; and this can only be done by destroying the temptations to its continuance, and giving to a youth the means of entirely quitting his old companions. The time has now come when this should not only occupy public attention, but be carried out on a system worthy of public support, and commensurate with the evil complained of. My own opinion is, that it should form part of the civil establishment of every town. It is as much a matter of interest and necessity as the administration of the poor laws, the establishment of police, and the correctional and expensive system of gaols and penal [illegible] neglect of these duties entails a far heavier

expense on the community than would a well-ordered system of benevolent and efficient measures, calculated not only to reach the evil, but to cure it.

Again I must point out another evil, the source of much misery, and the first incentive to demoralization. Youths who have broken through parental control, often the sons of poor widows, are in the habit of annoying passengers at the Railway Stations and other places for the purpose of serving as porters or guides. Two youths came under my notice a fortnight ago, neither of whom would labour at regular occupations, though work had been offered at moderate wages. They preferred the freedom and variety of chance jobs, with the privilege of spending their chance earnings on themselves. Much of the money so earned is spent in immoral pleasures: their idle habits are confirmed from day to day: they are constantly in the way of temptation, and in their wanderings about our streets, gradually form associations and companionships with others still more depraved and older in iniquity than themselves. All will allow that guides and porters are necessary; but it is not necessary that they should be composed of an unregistered, uncontrolled, immoral class, whose want of organization, uncertain attendance, and chance employments, and opportunities of extortion, are found so injurious to the minds and habits of those so employed. At all places where this class congregates, ticket porters should be employed, and no others should be allowed to ply. By this means many an elderly man, or one who was not fitted for a sedentary or regular employment, might find the means of comfortable support for himself and family. The youths I speak of give nothing for lodging or washing, and often abuse their friends when refused a share of the food which belongs to the more industrious portion of the family. All they earn is spent on their own pleasures, and it is only when this chance-work fails that they think of home.

EXTRACTS FROM FOURTH REPORT, 1848.

Never has there been a time when these Missions were more needed, or attention to the poor more imperative on the part of the wealthy. Distress has long been the lot of multitudes of the industrious, and men's minds have been agitated with political questions forced on their attention by the pressure of the times, whilst the quietude of usual life has been broken in upon by the recent revolution of France, and the stirring events rapidly taking place on the continent of Europe. The political adventurer has been busy sowing the seeds of discontent and of opposition to the Government; and ignorance will always lend a willing ear, in times of deep distress, to those who noisily put themselves forth as the people's only true friends. The poor starving operative, for months only partially employed, shut out from the place of worship on the Sunday, through the influence of the honourable pride which prevents his attendance at the house of God because he cannot appear there decent, having no friend in whose ear he can pour his griefs, except his neighbour, equally poor and miserable and forlorn, gradually learns to view the higher classes as his hereditary enemies and oppressors—to speak the language of the worst class of politicians—to look exclusively to physical force as the only means of reform,—and to nurture in his bosom feelings of the direst hate and most unmitigable revenge. Religion is viewed by this class with distrust, and eventually loses all its influence: the Christian Sabbath is perverted to the spread of political opinions, and to the reading of the worst kind of publications—to the inculcation of principles completely subversive of peace, law and order, and no less destructive to the virtues of the great body of the poor. Government is thought to possess the power to create employment—to prevent the reduction of the wages of labour—to feed, and clothe, and educate; in fact, to banish misery, uncertainty of employment, and all the evils incident to man, from the face of the land. In the midst of this angry sea of human strife, stirred up by distress, maddened by opposition, and rendered

wild by despair, the Missionary is called upon to launch his little boat, and endeavour to throw oil on the troubled waters. He searches out the neglected and the hopeless—has a word of comfort for the sorrowing—bears in his hand relief for the miserable and starving, and proves himself the servant of Christ and the friend of man. He encourages silent and retiring worth —places before the ignorant the means of education—lays the foundation of provident habits in the minds of the unthrifty, and calls the attention of the careless and the wicked to the duties of religion and a preparation for eternity. His labours, in proportion as they are successful, further the great ends of human progress—improve the feelings of the poor towards the rich—make the rich acquainted with the sufferings, difficulties, and virtues of the poor—contribute to the peace of the locality, the safety of property, and the spread of the doctrines of true religion.

The following are notes from my Journal of February. After preaching on Wednesday evening, I was requested to visit two of my people, one of whom is a recent hearer. I shall not easily forget how eagerly she desired me to pray for her that she might be prepared for Heaven. She thanked me again and again for awakening her to a sense of religion; and expressed her resignation either to live or die according to the will of her Heavenly Father. Whilst I was praying, it was piteous to hear the sobs of her husband and child. Then it was that I realized, in their fulness, the spirit of the words of the Apostle, "Weep with them that weep." I could not refrain from tears myself as I witnessed this moving scene, and heard her sing, after the prayer was ended, with her feeble voice. I saw what might be done in arousing the careless, instructing the ignorant, and drawing the wicked to goodness, by one more talented, more spiritual, and more prayerful than myself. People can understand the feeling and need of religion when they cannot comprehend the dogmas of divines.—The next case was that of an older woman, who this time last year was wicked and without

religion. She, however, commenced attendance with our opening of the Chapel in Bailey-street. From that time she has been very regular, and soon grew serious and prayerful. She was also the instrument of bringing the woman of the house where she lodged into connection with the services of God's house, and introduced me as the Minister. I have had many proofs lately of their being both really good women. Some months since the poor old woman was extremely ill, and not expected to recover. I have every reason to believe that her illness was owing to a long-continued want of the necessaries of life. During a portion of that time I also was ill from over-fatigue and exposure to the cold. At this time several of our poor friends endeavoured to supply my place in the visitations of the sick. A poor blind beggar was very attentive to this poor old woman: she told him, in one of their conversations, that she had great reason to thank God that ever I came amongst them; for before she had not cared at all about religion, or attended a place of worship.

In repeating these things, said without a thought of their ever being mentioned again, I may appear egotistical. I have, however, kept back many such sayings which, though gratifying to my own mind and encouraging at the time, yet might appear to others as self-praise when repeated by and of myself. Yet I must tell you that it is not all pleasant; and that though these things encourage, I have many to grieve and oppress my mind. Many times I ask myself, Who is equal to these things? I have been materially helped by some of the men belonging to our congregation. I have found their visits very useful indeed, and highly acceptable; they are able to visit at such times as it would be highly impolitic for me to do so: they see too, the true habits of the people, as they are less careful or able to disguise their feelings or doings from those on an equality with themselves. If I could, I would have an army of poor volunteer visiters on the Sunday, who should go out in the true spirit of Christ to kindly talk to the wicked, the drunken, and the careless, and invite them, and where they can, bring them to the house of God—

who should penetrate every court, searching out the sick and the miserable, and forming a system of friendly religious intercourse with all its inhabitants. I believe that such a system, rightly begun and wisely carried out, would be fraught with immense good. Many a drunkard would be reclaimed; and many, who now spend their Sundays in filth and sin, would be gradually brought to the house of prayer: the weak would be confirmed in their good endeavours, and many a wanderer brought back to the fold of the good Shepherd. Some such system as this is absolutely necessary to achieve any real and extensive reformation amongst the vicious poor.

I am sorry to have to complain of the want of courtesy and Christian conduct in some of the visiters to the poor, and of the unmanly way in which they seek to destroy my influence with the people. The very fact of my being a Unitarian is considered evidence enough for them to brand me as a most dangerous character—dangerous to the present and future welfare of all connected with me. At once, without stopping to inquire what my religious views are, they charge me with "not believing in the LORD JESUS CHRIST," as being an "unbeliever of the Bible," and as being out of the pale of Christianity. Only a week ago, a Church minister went to one of the members of my congregation, a man who has worshipped with us for two years, and whose heart God hath opened to the influence of Divine truth, and enriched with the virtues of Christianity. No sooner did this minister know that this excellent man was a communicant with us, though he had obtained all his good since his connexion with us, than he solemnly warned him of his soul's danger; told him I did not believe in Christ or the word of God; and, when shown to the contrary, still reiterated his charge. At length my friend grew disgusted, and put into his hand one of my printed addresses, containing a statement of my views, drawn out in the language of Scripture, and having the references attached. He looked over it; and not being able to refute it, said, with an ungenerous and unchristian spirit, "Mr.

Brooks does not believe this: he merely puts it forth to draw the people." I need not say that his infamous charge was not believed. The answer was, "I know my Minister better than you do:" and, taking up the Bible, he said, "Mr. Brooks does believe this book, and I know he preaches the true Gospel." Several of our people have, at different times, been insulted, and felt themselves called upon to order these unchristian men from their houses. "Wretched woman," said one of these persons, in the month of January last, to one of our people, when told she attended Bailey-street Chapel; "don't you know that they don't believe in Jesus Christ, and if you go there you cannot go to Heaven?" "No, sir," was the answer, "I didn't know that; and I can soon show you different." So saying she ran up stairs, and, bringing down a Prayer Book, put it into his hand, saying, "This was a gift from our Minister. Is there nothing about Jesus Christ there." "Ah! well," said he, "if they believe in him now, they didn't some time ago."

I do not mention these things in a querulous spirit. If I were actuated by sectarian feelings, I should desire this conduct to be continued; for nothing makes the well-disposed adhere more closely to us, or tends more powerfully to bring the denomination so acting into contempt. They only draw from us the mercenary and the unimproved. There is, however, one powerful reason which of itself should make them desist; namely, the obstacle thus thrown in the way of the ultimate improvement of the most degraded class of the population. It takes often months, and sometimes even years, to gain the ears and hearts of the dissipated; and just as we are beginning to awaken the slumbering conscience and attach them to the house of God, and thus place them in the way of virtue and religion, they are waited upon by a sectarian, they learn that we are very unpopular, and that they can make some little gain by changing their places of worship; they, therefore, get what they can by way of charity, and in this way make the round of the various denominations, absorbing the funds that would have effectively

elevated many families, and remaining at the end hardened by the process, and rendered skilful by practice in the arts of deception and imposture. I have met with many such cases. They look upon the benevolent, of every denomination, as "flats," and as fair game for every imposition. Of religion, they have often the highest contempt; because not being able to enter into the nice shades of religious differences, they see nothing in it but its oppositions and mean contentions for proselytes. They learn to view it either as untrue, or, at all events, as but little understood by its professors. If the benevolent would only meet once a month, once a quarter, or once in half a year, to compare notes, and endeavour to elicit the best plans for improving the poor and discovering the systematic impostor, this large town might be properly visited, the deserving sought out, the miserable properly befriended, and the trade of the habitual beggar completely destroyed. There needs no sacrifice of religious principle to do this; it only requires that the visiters should be actuated by Christian motives instead of merely sectarian ones. I have never willingly or knowingly drawn any one from Church or Chapel. My mission is not to such as attend a place of worship, but to those without a Shepherd and out of the fold of the Christian Church. My object is to make the wicked—Christians; to reform the vicious, and reclaim the drunkard. In prosecution of these designs, I have kept, and ever will keep, to the declaration of the Apostle; "I am determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Had there been a friendly feeling on the part of other denominations, and occasional meetings of the kind mentioned above, I could have saved many pounds to their poor's purse, and prevented a vast deal of sinful imposition. The very fact of my having been seen making a few friendly calls with the visiters in certain streets, would have struck terror into the hearts of many who live by their wits. "Verily the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light." They confer together, and lay out well their system of villainies and decep-

tions. If *they* do it, and do it successfully, for evil purposes, ought not *we*, whose professions are so much better, to do it for the world's prosperity and the good of the really necessitous?

Making a call at a house one night, where a person was ill, I went rather unexpectedly up stairs to the lodger's room, and was surprised to see, in one of the rooms through which I passed, six young men all huddled round a candle placed on the floor, absorbed in a game of cards. This was their bed-room: all the beds were on the floor, in a most shocking state of filth. I spoke to them appropriately, but without any apparent effect at the time. I am, however, happy to say that the mistress of the house, and the lodger, who was sick, are both communicants with us; and that the practice of gambling has been altogether discontinued in that house. So much were these young men fascinated by the love of gaming, that they would secrete themselves in the cellar on the Sunday, in order to indulge in it without molestation. They have caused me a great deal of labour and anxiety, and they are still far from being so improved as I could desire.

In June, called at a court in —— street; found the O——s all ill of the fever. The woman, covered with rags in a most disgusting state of filth, her hair all in confusion, sat groaning, in an old broken chair, with nothing on but a portion of an old skirt, a gown in complete shreds, and a shawl rent in every direction. Her husband sat on the other side of the fire, also ill of the fever, without neckerchief, coat, or stockings, his bosom bare, and his feet in an old cradle. Two children were also ill from the same cause; one, just recovering, sat, with his blanched face and shrunken frame, a pitiable object. There was no bed in the house; and the whole scene presented to view the most complete picture of hopeless despairing misery I ever saw. The stench of the place was beyond all bearing: but I could not leave them without relief, and a portion of time spent in conversation and prayer. I had known them in health, and took the opportunity of showing them that "The curse of

God is in the habitation of wickedness:[2] and how they had disregarded my warnings in former times, when sickness had visited them, and they had promised to serve God and give up their beastly habits of intoxication. They both promised, should they recover, to attend our Chapel. Though I stayed with them half an hour, I dared not sit down; for in this wretched den all kinds of human parasites swarmed in countless numbers.

What a contrast is this to the gaudy flaring gin palace: yet, to support the splendour of the one, the earnings of a thousand homes of the industrious poor are daily, hourly drained. I never hear the merry sounds of music issuing from these gold-bedizened places, or look upon their almost fairy grandeur, without thinking of the groans I have heard, the misery of conscience I have had to soothe, the pestilence I have had to brave, the desolated homes I have had to visit, the famine I have had to relieve, and the nakedness I have had to clothe: and all caused by the demon, "strong drink." If any thing demands the attention of the legislature and the philanthropist, it is the limitation or destruction of this giant evil. On every hand these palaces, or rather moral pest-houses, rear their head without hinderance, or judicial difficulty thrown in the way of their multiplication. Neither the home of the workman, the factory, the People's Instruction Society, or "Ragged" Evening School, is rendered secure from their intrusion. They rise in close proximity to nullify the good done, at great cost and trouble, by the friends of humanity. Fifty-two persons have been seen to enter the ——— gin palace, at the top of ——— street, in the short space of five minutes—thirty-one of whom have been known prostitutes. I cannot walk to and from the Schools without being annoyed by these wretches, who have fellows lurking in the distance to punish, by blows, any man who may resent their familiarities. Boys and girls from the Evening Schools have been seen to go into this place and drink at the counter. A short time since a lady had the boldness, under the spur of the moment, to pull back one of her own

scholars just as she was entering the doors. Was this place brought near to the homes or schools of the wealthy, and known to blight the efforts of teachers, to corrupt the habits of the children, and injure their prospects for ever, it would long ago have been swept away with the besom of destruction. Why, then, should it be tolerated near the schools and institutions of the poor?

Perhaps the greatest triumph of the Mission has been the thorough reclamation of the family of the H———s, in ——— street. For two years they resisted my efforts: the whole of the adult portion of the family being given up to intoxication, quarrelling, and swearing. The Sunday was the day principally devoted to these practices. They were noted in the street, bad as it is, as the most hopelessly depraved. Even the neighbours expostulated with me for visiting them. "Sir, it is of no use; they'll never change; they'll only make fun of you." I turned a deaf ear to all, and persevered. They are now as remarkable for their Christian conduct and regular attendance at worship as they were before for sin. Both father, mother, and sons belong to our congregation, and attend all our services. After the mother had been accepted as a communicant, she stated her obligation to the Mission, and the pleasure she found in the service of religion. "Twelve months ago I was bad enough, and never thought of good things; but ever since I have taken to coming to Chapel, every thing has gone on better with us. I don't know if it is fancy, but even the trees in the window seem to flourish better." There is sound reason in this; for, when she was a drunkard, her trees were often neglected, but are now attended to with punctuality.

The services of the Mission Chapel are very onerous, but not more so than the peculiar nature of the congregation requires. The most assiduous care is necessary: on the least neglect many would go back to their old habits of wickedness. They are often ignorant of the very first principles of the Gospel, and very many are quite unable to read. To large numbers of the

population the pulpit, as of old, offers the only means of acquiring a knowledge of God and the duties of religion. I have not met with a single case of true and lasting reform apart from religious influence. Mere morality is not powerful enough to change the heart or regulate the conduct. It is the Gospel alone which is capable of manifesting itself as the power of God—the Gospel is the only true reformer. The commands and the threatenings—the expostulations and the promises—the rewards and the punishments—the hopes and fears of religion—are necessary to move the affections and influence the mind.

According to the wishes of my flock, I have endeavoured to supply their increasing spiritual wants by services on the Monday and Wednesday evenings. This was at their own reiterated request, altogether independent of any suggestion from me. On Monday evening I read and explained The Pilgrim's Progress, which has been found highly useful and attractive. The congregation of adults ranges from fifty to sixty.

Extracts from Fifth Report, 1849.

We last week lost by death an old member of our Church. Though poor she was much respected, and I believe prepared for a change of worlds. She had been a very abandoned character, but was one of the first fruits of our labours in the Bailey Street Chapel. She listened with serious attention to the sermons, and always gladly received my visits. The result was, that she made herself useful, and her poor home worthy of the name of a Christian's abode. I do not think there could be a poorer woman in this large town; but I am also sure that a more industrious, exemplary, or consistently pious one, could not be found. When health permitted, she was always in her proper place at public worship, both on the Sunday and the week evening services. On working days, the morning no sooner dawned than she might be seen plodding her weary way to labour. The coldest or the wettest weather always found her at her post of

duty, cheerful, content, and hopeful. There is no doubt on the minds of her neighbours that her days have been considerably shortened by her toils and privations. Poor old Betty D——— earned her living by washing for large families of the working class. Her remuneration was but scanty, yet I never knew her to complain. Had it not been for the timely aid afforded her by this Mission, I believe she would not have recovered from her illness in 1847. She expressed her thankfulness for the gifts of flannel waistcoats, &c., which were given her. Through the whole of her illness I have witnessed her resigned and cheerful efforts to please her Heavenly Father and wait His will. It was her earnest desire to be removed to that happy world where sin and sorrow are not known. Her end was perfect peace.

Mrs. W ———, L——— street, has been an abandoned character; latterly she has attended our Chapel quite regularly until laid aside by a most painful and dangerous disorder. For some months now she has acted like a Christian, as far as her knowledge would allow. Her mind, when I first visited her, was very dark: she could not read, but she sought every opportunity of hearing the Word read. One Sunday morning she sent for me before service, as she was not expected to live, and received most eagerly the words of comfort I had to bestow; lamented her own folly in neglecting religion so long; and when I went to take leave of her, she burst into tears, and pressing my hand affectionately said, "Oh, sir! be sure and tell the young from me not to neglect the concerns of the soul as I have done." Though not able to read, she constantly kept the New Testament by her that her visiters might read to her as often as possible; and when she could not find one able to do so, would kiss the book very fervently. As she was very dangerously ill at the time, I did not interfere with this practice, though many would, perhaps, smile at it as a superstitious act. I believe the true reason was a devout feeling of reverence for the message of love and mercy which she knew the book contained. She has since recovered, and is a changed character. Her home and her

child are clean and comfortable, and she is thoroughly industrious, and as regular as possible in her attendance at worship. She has exerted no little moral influence in the court where she lives, bringing others with her to the house of God.

One scene made a deep impression on my mind—it was a case of cholera. The family of G———s, had been altogether unobservant of the Sabbath, and had continued very poor. Sickness had found the man unprepared for death. I shall never forget his despairing look when he found he was dying, or the agony of the wife and relations, who knelt around the bed weeping and wringing their hands. He was asked by one of them if he thought he should go to Heaven. "No! no! I sha'nt: I feel I sha'nt:" but the look and the tone are indescribable. Here was the concentration of spiritual despair—the uprise of the sins of a whole life of rebellion against God—a human soul, whose powers of holiness had not been cultivated, but had been living in sin and disregard of the law of the Supreme, and was now called "to give an account of the deeds done in the body." He hung on my lips with breathless attention while I declared to him the message of God's love to man, and the Mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. I left him comforted, and I hope with clearer views of the character of the Holy One. When asked if I should come and pray with him again, he said, "Oh! do; it is so precious." He died, leaving a widow and seven children. She now attends our place, the neighbours belonging to us being very attentive to her. She earnestly desired me to look in upon her from time to time, and give her advice about the children.

There is one feature about our Mission which is very pleasing. Great numbers of those reclaimed from vice and misery continue to go on well. And in many cases where they have fallen again, it has only been for a time; care and attention frequently leading to a renewed exertion for reformation.

During the last few months I have lectured in Lawrence-street, to good audiences, on "Home—its Duties and Influences:"

"Ancient Egypt," two Lectures; "Babylon;" and "Poetry." Some attended these who would on no account come to hear a sermon.

The Sunday School—an important feature in our Mission—has increased very rapidly, the number of scholars being now 300. Many lately have been sent back for want of a proper supply of teachers. Some teachers have left because the School was not satisfactorily superintended, and their places have not yet been properly filled up. I have now taken the superintendence into my own hands, and an improvement has already taken place. On Thursday evenings I meet the teachers for the purpose of giving them instruction, and rendering them more fitted for their work. We need intelligent and well-educated men, but are compelled to take such volunteers as may be found in the district. The Savings' Club connected with the School is of great use to the children.

At present the great demand has been for books of a light character, and for many years to come this must be expected. The same complaint has to be made respecting the higher classes. The love of fiction is not confined to the poor. It has its uses, and we believe only lasts for a season, and prepares the mind of youth for higher works. Many begin a course of reading with the cheap and exciting trash of the lower news shops, and are led on to an acquaintance with works of purer taste and of a higher standard. The mind soon becomes satiated with the unreal and horrible, and their improvement in the art of reading induced by the perusal of the trashy publications, has enabled them to understand and read with pleasure, books of greater value and real utility. Still, let us not be misunderstood. We do not vindicate the perusal of bad or doubtful books. That Providence so frequently educes good out of evil, is no argument for the continuance or support of evil influences. The fact just recorded shows that the want of books exists, and is felt by the people at large, even by the poorest,—that mental recreation is demanded, and must be supplied by those who have the interest

of the poor at heart, or needy adventurers and unprincipled writers and publishers will cater for their tastes, and reap a rich harvest by pandering to the worst passions of our nature. Books of a high literary and scientific kind, are now frequently asked for, especially in Mechanics, Chemistry, and general literature.

Extracts from Sixth Report, 1850.

The work of the Minister to the Poor is one of singular delicacy, and is mixed up with many painful as well as pleasant scenes. All things tend to prove that lasting progress on the part of the masses must necessarily be slow, and must be based on the education of the rising generation. Still much may be done to improve the parents of the present race, by pressing on their attention the duties of religion, and bringing the careless into union with the thoughtful and the religious. It is no easy matter however to change old and inveterate habits, and make people obedient to the voice of conscience. An experience of six years has not been lost upon me, but has afforded many lessons of dear bought wisdom. To many persons it may at first sight appear a very pleasant occupation to seek out the neglected and the distressed, to adminster relief and offer consolation to the suffering; but no one can truly picture the anxieties with which the Missionary has often to watch and wait, to visit and remonstrate as he labours for the reformation of an abandoned character, before he sees the first dawn of true repentance. Then he is often caused to grieve over the relapses, the weaknesses and sins, of those who for some time have afforded him the highest hopes of success.

Much more permanent success would attend the labours of the Minister, if he was supported by the personal attendance and assistance of the Subscribers, or of a more educated body of friends to whom he could look, and on whom he could rely, to fill the different offices naturally required in a Christian Church and Sunday Schools. A body like this is absolutely necessary to carry out all the objects of a Mission to the Poor,

to give a tone to the congregation, to relieve the Minister of minor duties that he may apply himself exclusively to the one great object of attending to the temporal and spiritual interests of those already brought into connexion with the congregation and schools, as well as the unreclaimed whom he is seeking to influence in his visits. In the absence of a class such as I have described, I am compelled to be the Superintendent of the Sunday School, Librarian, Teacher of the Evening Classes for Instruction, and at present Secretary to the Sick Club as well as Collector for the Savings' Club. In the Boys' Sunday School we have but one Teacher beyond the rank of a common labourer. The remainder are all persons whom I have met with in my visits. Two of them are rag and bone collectors, one is a day labourer, another is a bricklayer's assistant. Two are shoe-makers, and the others belong to the common crafts of the town. None of these are of sufficient standing or education to be advanced to offices which require any degree of mental ability above the ordinary routine of their classes.

Profound ignorance is still the lot of the many, and even those who have profited in some degree by the Sunday and other Schools, have only done so intellectually. The heart has remained untouched, the best feelings have remained uninfluenced, the soul has been untrained in spiritual things. This class therefore as they grow up, do not enter our Chapels and our Churches; they go to swell the ranks of wickedness, and for their perusal the licentious portion of the press sends forth its exciting trash by millions of sheets per annum. To remedy this state of things, education must be made more general, and be spiritual as well as intellectual. Unless this is done, education will fail. At present we are in a transition state; the best things are perverted to the worst and most degrading uses. Music, one of the most improving of the arts, is allied with the pot house, and made a snare to entrap the young and the giddy. The press, the most powerful lever for the elevation of the masses, is to a great extent used as a means of corrup-

tion and moral degradation. This however we are sure cannot last, if the friends of religion do their duty to train up the race of children now thronging our different schools. On no subject amongst the very poor is there more ignorance than on the subject of religion. This is the source of all their errors, the origin of all their vices, the cause of all their miseries. The Bible to millions yet is almost a sealed book. As a proof, we need only refer to the criminal lists, to the deficiency of pure rectitude on the part of so many, and to the success of the Latter Day Saints, and other fanatical impostors of the present day. Teach a man so as to yield a ready obedience to the voice of conscience, to shun a lie in all its forms, and to regard the precepts of Christ as things to be reduced to practice and as essential to salvation, and you have done much to prepare him to enter with the certainty of success on the duties and to encounter the difficulties of human life. But if he entertain the superstitious idea that he can safely enjoy a life of sin, and finally obtain an admission into heaven by a (so called) death-bed repentance or by priestly mummeries, but little can be really done to promote a true reformation of character. I have dwelt longer on this than I otherwise should have done; but experience has taught me to look for extended and permanent success only through the means of a more perfect education embracing not only the intellect but also the spiritual part of our nature.

One of the most serious obstacles to our success arises from the hostility of the other denominations on account of our Unitarianism. They will not understand that our object is not to make proselytes to our views, but to christianise the wicked and the immoral. Whenever a new Scripture Reader comes into the district, he seems to consider it as a matter of course that a new crusade should be entered upon against the hated Unitarians. This, however, does no good, even to his own party, but it does cause trouble and anxiety to me; and to some of the more ignorant and mercenary amongst the

poor, it does positive harm. Calling on a family in T—— Street, in consequence of their recent absence from worship, I found that their fears had been excited on account of our being denounced as unbelievers. In leaving ours, they had attended at no place of worship, but had sunk into the habits of low gossip on the Sunday; this had led to tippling, and tippling had introduced quarrels. After answering the charges of unbelief, and vindicating our views from the unchristian aspersions of the slanderer, I asked the mother whether the family had been benefited by these religious contentions, and the alterations of conduct resulting from them. She said—"No, we have not. I am ashamed to see you: I ought not to have heard anything against you; but you see I am a poor weak ignorant woman. It serves me right, for nothing has prospered with us since we left our chapel. I have been beaten till I was not fit to be seen, and my poor Charles has had to leave home and go abroad for work, and I am afraid my youngest daughter will go to ruin. Do get her back to school—I can do nothing with her—I beg and pray all to no purpose. You told me what would happen when she first left: one part has come true, but I pray God the other may not." She promised if she could get her children to return to school, she would never leave us again by any one's persuasion. They have not returned, and the mother only attends very irregularly. How much better would it have been for this visitor to have turned his attention to the large and increasing class who attend at no place of worship, instead of endeavouring to unsettle the habits of a family like the above. I feel a peculiar sort of attachment to this family from the fact that it has cost me an immense amount of trouble, and from the mingled feelings of hope and fear which it has excited in my mind. It is a family which has always had a number of lodgers, to whom I have been very useful as a minister and teacher.

EXTRACTS FROM SEVENTH REPORT, 1851.

I am more and more convinced that the great evils under which society is groaning are not the want of employment or the crushing influence of poverty, but arise from irreligion, ignorance and intemperance. This is it that casts a blight on the poor man's home, and destroys the best feelings of his nature. There is not a great deal of real or reasoning scepticism amongst the masses of the population; at least I have failed to discover it, if it is so; but there is a wide-spread feeling of distrust in religious bodies and organizations: a restless, undefined sensation of disappointment as to the results of religious teachings and influence. There is evil and error somewhere in the workings of the Christian Church, but it is not known exactly where. In the mean time the feeling of religious indifference keeps spreading on every hand, and practical infidelity is the result. Intemperance takes deeper root, and poverty and misery abound. In the midst of all this darkness and gloom, there are bright spots where Christian love beams forth, and the moral desert blossoms as the rose. I have seen enough to convince me that we need not fear for the future welfare and improvement of man. The efforts now put forth by the different sections of the Christian Church, though sometimes marred by the bigoted exclusiveness of well-meaning but narrow-minded workers, are making a decided impression on society. But we must not forget that our present evils are the growth of centuries, and are not to be removed in an age. They must, however, give way before the well-directed and continuous efforts of the good and the wise of every party of the religious world.

In my visits I am as welcome as ever to the homes of the people, and have seen marked improvement in a great number. Some who have given me great uneasiness by their occasional falls into irregularity of conduct, have again cheered me by clear indications of amendment. In some respects I get into the habit of expecting great things from my flock—perhaps too much when we come to take into account their past training and

present temptations. I do feel thankful to Almighty God for the amount of happiness we have been enabled to confer on such a number of families. Even those who cannot worship with us think highly of our labours, and are as anxious to see me as members of my own congregation. I allude to families I first found in misery, filth, and squalor, and first put on the way to happiness and virtue. A short time since I was accosted by a little girl whose respectable appearance and general intelligence quite prevented my recognizing her as an old acquaintance. She said—"Don't you know me, Mr. Brooks, my name is H———, my father often talks about you, and would be very glad if you would call and see him." This family I found in one of my first visits to Thomas-street. At first the man would not speak in answer to my questions, and treated me with sullen indifference. By degrees, however, I gained his confidence—he told me his troubles, which were very great—and I succeeded in procuring him employment. His dirty home soon became clean; finally he gave up his ready-furnished room, and bought household furniture of his own, and is now as comfortable and respectable as it is possible for a working man to be. Being a Calvinist in principle he does not worship with us, but I believe is now a member of the Ebenezer congregation.

The Savings' Club has been very successful indeed, and many have been the thanks of the depositors. At first I went from house to house for the purpose of collecting the various sums: this I was compelled to give up, in consequence of the increasing fatigue such duties imposed after the great labours of the Sunday. This induced me to open one of the class rooms at the Mission Chapel, on Monday mornings, from 10 till 12 o'clock. During these two hours the people bring their money to me, or receive it from me, as suits their convenience. During the past year there have been over 300 depositors, whose weekly savings have been from a half-penny upwards. Many of these are children belonging to the Sunday School, who are thus trained up in provident habits. No less than ninety-five pounds have

passed through my hands in this club. Last year the repayments were £32. 1s. 7½d., this year they amount to £88. 2s. 7d. Most of this, I am assured, has been spent in clothing, or in the payment of debts. I have been told by many they regard the money returned as a gift, inasmuch as they find it impossible to keep little sums at home for any length of time.

Extracts from Eighth Report, 1852.

At the close of last year I was requested to call on a family in B—— street. On entering the house, which I found in a most unhealthy situation, I was introduced into a sick chamber, where both the man and his wife lay ill of the fever. I shall never forget the impression produced by the reading of the Scriptures, and the application to their case. Towards the close of my remarks the man respectfully asked me to stop reading. "You will excuse my freedom, but I must thank you for the kind manner in which you have set forth the comforts of religion. I don't wish to deceive you; I have been visited before, but instead of its doing me any good it did me real harm, for the visiter had a strong voice and a hard and unfeeling manner. He told me that if I did not believe certain things which he laid down for me I should go to hell. He seemed not to consider the distracting effect produced on my head, and the feelings of horror which thrilled my nerves as he set forth his religious views. I could not love or reverence either him or the Bible; I love to hear you talk, and hope you will come again." I visited them all through their illness, and the relapse and subsequent recovery of his wife and child. These people had been lovers of pleasure, and though earning good wages, were in great poverty; but from the time of their recovery they commenced a regular attendance at the Mission Chapel; their wages are devoted to the payment of debts and the good of the family. The man shows his gratitude by his kindness to the poor of the congregation, by his active distribution of tracts, and his Sunday visits at the homes of the afflicted; in these

efforts his wife sympathizes, and there is every prospect of their continuing valuable members of our society.

The temperance movement has done great good to numerous individuals, and is doing a greater work to society at large by its inquiries into the drinking customs, the immoralities connected with the sale of intoxicating beverages, and the ravages it causes, by engendering disease and fostering neglect. I expect no real improvement in society, on an extensive scale, until education is more general; and not even then unless the public-houses are brought more under the control of the Magistrate, and music and recreations, such as dancing, &c., be rigidly prohibited in connexion with them. Their numbers are out of all proportion to the requirements of the population, and instead of being the resting places of the way-farer, the means of supplying a necessary and refreshing beverage to the neighbourhood, they are licensed moral nuisances, pauperizing, criminalizing contrivances, spreading their demoralizing influences far and wide in the homes of the people. This is but a very meagre outline of our labours and resnlts; much is necessarily unreportable; it is done in secret, and requires time to make it apparent even to myself. Some of the good done we are never permitted to see here, and it is our privilege in many instances only to hear of it at distant intervals and from unlooked-for quarters. The age demands increased exertions, and the necessity of the times requires all our efforts for the spread of the blessings of education and religion. I conclude in the beautiful language of the Saviour, "Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."

Extracts from Ninth Report, 1853.

Without doubt there has of late been great improvement in the physical condition of the great body of the working classes,

but not, I fear, any corresponding progress in mental and spiritual advancement. There is more eating and drinking, and better clothes are worn; there is a greater avidity for pleasure and excitement, and more trips to the beautiful rural spots in the neighbourhood, and cheap excursion trains to the distant towns and cities of England; and without doubt this is a vast improvement, when compared with the debasing pleasures of the same classes of society fifty or seventy years ago. Yet, as at present carried out, it does not, I fear, afford evidence of a very high state of Christian civilization. In many instances the desire for pleasure is gratified at all costs, and without reference to what is due to the claims of children or justice to creditors. Home, the care bestowed on the children, the manner in which the family intercourse is carried on, and the state of affections to be observed there, afford the proper and truest evidence of the mental and spiritual state of the people. In very many instances I have been pained to discover such an amount of ignorance, vice, and irreligion, amongst what may be called a very high class of mechanics and well-to-do people. Outwardly they appear very respectable and genteel, but their "speech bewrayeth" them, and proves that though they are clothed in soft raiment and fine attire, yet their minds are ungarnished, and their language and manners wofully unrefined. Nor is this to be wondered at, when we come to consider how short a time the children of many, even of what are called respectable people, remain at either the Day or Sunday School, and the early age at which they break off from the restraints and teachings of the Christian church. There is then no remaining influence of an improving character to which they are subjected, but only to the lowest and most exciting of the trashy literature of the day. To them, even in this reading age, books of scientific discovery or religious knowledge, are altogether unknown: indeed I have met with numerous instances in which a most settled repugnance has been manifested towards books of a religious kind. It must not be supposed,

however, that ignorance is bliss, or a matter of indifference, or that people can be comfortable in their circumstances, or socially happy under such an untoward state of things. Ignorance lays a heavy tax not only on individuals, but families and communities; and makes multitudes miserable, degraded, and poor, who, were they able to enjoy mental pleasures and make the most of their ample earnings, might command every needful earthly blessing and be an honour to all connected with them.

One of our Teachers, Mr. W——, has been on strike and tramping about, but has now returned. They were saving a little money, but had to draw it out of the Savings' Club to meet the expenses of the strike. One thing I observe is, that the women are not generally friends to the turn-out, and are very unsparing in their remarks as to the Committee-men. After several weeks' strike, much expense, considerable discomfort and weary tramping, W—— went to work at a rise of a penny per pair, and had to pay a levy of 1s. per week to help to support the men still turned out. The wife of another shoe-maker told me that the strike had been five pounds loss to them. During the past year I have met with many shoemakers in my visits, and have been astonished at the intelligence to be found amongst them. Some evidently have been persons well brought up, and of extensive reading.

In February last I called at the B——s, and found them in great destitution. He is a very intelligent man, but prematurely old, owing, I fear, to hard work in close rooms and to bitter poverty. He is a translator of old shoes now, for eye-sight fails him, and he works for a shop in L—— Street, kept by people almost as poor as himself. This man had not been in a place of worship for many years, and was in the constant habit of working on the Sunday. He did not like it, he said, but necessity was a hard law, and the pittance he receives for his work is of the most miserable kind: his price for fronting and soling a pair of men's half-boots being from eight pence to eleven pence per pair, and out of this he has to find hemp and

other materials. Sometimes his wife has to go five times in one day for her money. On one occasion they had three and sixpence coming to them, and on the Saturday she called at the shop the above number of times, and in the end received only two-pence halfpenny. That night they went supperless to bed, and rose on the Sunday morning without the prospect of breakfast, until the employer had sold some old shoes. It was eleven o'clock before they had secured any of their earnings from this Sunday trafficker. How could these forlorn creatures take pleasure in the ordinances of the Christian church? Yet there was every desire to do so, had they been placed in favourable circumstances. To them the Sabbath bell brought no relief from toil and want—no refreshment from clean garments and persons—no improving influence to the way-worn and dejected spirit from the ministration of the Christian church, or sympathy from fellow-christians—and no ray of comfort or of hope to that miserable and obscure home. I enquired as to what amount would render them in some measure independent of their poverty-stricken employer. He said a matter of 5s. would enable him to do work frequently on his own account, from which he would derive much greater profit. Though my poor's purse is but indifferently furnished, I presented him with 2s. 6d., which he promised he would expend on the materials of his trade. I left them with thankful hearts and grateful expressions at the unexpected sympathy they had met with. The visits have not been in vain. The Sunday labour has ceased, the Bible is read, and the woman, an amiable gentle creature, is regularly in her place at Chapel on Sunday evenings. The husband promised of his own accord to do so when he gets better clothes.

Experience has taught me not to expect the moral reformation of a family or their continuance in well-doing, unless there is a proper observance of the Christian Sabbath. I do not mean a pharisaic but an enlightened cheerful respect paid to its claims and duties as a day of rest and mental and spiritual

improvement. I have strong faith in the power of sympathy, in the influence of example, in promoting habits of cleanliness, decency and order, and in the power of the pulpit to enlighten and spiritualize. I have, however, a jealous feeling with regard to some of the fashionable movements of the day. It is possible the evangelical portion of society has thrown an apparent gloom around the subject of religion, and decried too many harmless indulgences; but that is no reason why we should go to the opposite extreme and relax unduly the wholesome restraint of religion, and regard man as a merely sensuous pleasure-hunting being or a work-producing machine. The truly philosophic philanthropist will endeavour to surround all who belong to the great family of man with the most favourable circumstances and improving influences, not looking upon them and treating them wholly as beings connected with earth, or creatures living entirely for another world, but properly adjusting things so as to harmonize the conflicting claims of body and spirit—time and eternity.

These thoughts have been suggested by conversations held with very intelligent working men, who are close and tolerably accurate observers of passing events. The Saturday half-holiday system has its advocates and opponents amongst this class. To the steady and thoughtful it will be a great boon, but to the drunken and the dissolute, and those connected with them, a source of temptation and a curse. To counteract its evils and make the men in some measure independent of the seductions of the public-house, cheap News Rooms will be required, and a cheap Saturday night concert at the Town Hall or some central institution, in the winter season; while fields in the different districts for Cricket and other manly sports will be absolutely necessary in the summer months. At present there are thousands of working men who cannot read sufficiently well to resort to books for amusement and instruction: to these the public-house, the sparring-room, the card-table and the low saloon are all attractive. In youth these are most likely pigeon-

flyers and street gamblers; in manhood, dog-fighters and loose disreputable characters. To give them more time then from the workshop, is only to give them greater opportunities to indulge in their favourite but demoralizing pursuits, unless steps are simultaneously taken to supply opportunities for refining pleasures and nobler sports. But one serious objection urged against the half-holiday system is the extra hour for labour required during the other days in the week. Several of my people can on this account no longer attend our week evening services, neither can they attend classes or lectures. I expect this movement, which is only an experiment, will die a natural death, or undergo considerable modification. A feeling seems to be rising amongst the operatives in favour of an arrangement, whereby they can be paid an hour or two earlier than the old time on the Saturday. In speaking to a man on the frequent absences of his boys from School on Sunday mornings, he said, "I cannot now get my boys up in time for school; for since the half-holiday system has begun, they are off rambling about, and come home so tired that it is impossible to have them ready. In my opinion, Sir, it is a great evil."

The Library is an increasing source of attraction to the people of the district, and is a powerful stimulus to education. This year the borrowers have amounted to 154, the issues and exchanges 3185. The New Meeting People's Instruction Society having closed its career in December last, I purchased the library belonging thereto for the sum of £10., and added it to the Mission Library at Lawrence Street Chapel. The number of volumes now in the library amounts to 1900: and the library is thrown open to the people of the district generally at sixpence per quarter, or a halfpenny per week, but to teachers and scholars in our schools a penny per month. We have already received a large accession of subscribers, and have no doubt but that in the winter it will be highly successful. Very often am I told by people who come to exchange their books, "It ought to be encouraged, Sir: it is a great boon to me." There are many

whom we cannot influence directly either morally or spiritually. These the library may reach, and thus a high and improving class of books may be widely circulated. One of the most pleasing instances of its success appeared almost immediately after it was thrown open to the public. A youth, J. B——, took out a book on the Saturday night. On the following Monday morning he sent 3s. to the Savings' Club; since then he has been a regular depositor, and has now £1. 12s. in my hands. I congratulated his mother one day on the change which had taken place in her son. She said, "I may thank your library for it: for he would not have saved a farthing if it had not been for that. He used to stand at the corner, with those wicked lads, and gamble away his money by Sunday night; but he stops at home now to read, and is saving his money to buy a suit of clothes." Through the kindness of several friends I received more than half of the sum necessary to pay for the additional books, and from the Mission Committee the grant of a cupboard. The income for the past year was £16. 7s. 2d.

The Tract Society still continues in active operation, as described in my last report. The contributions of the members during the past year have amounted to £1. 11s. The tracts are very thankfully received, and in some cases have been attended with encouraging results. A person living in Lister Street asked one of our friends if he knew Lawrence Street Chapel; for, said he, we had a tract brought to our house yesterday, one of the most beautiful I ever heard. He said he should have gone out drinking if it had not been for that. He had heard it twice read, and then took it to some relations for them to read it. When informed by Mr. B—— that he belonged to that Chapel, he said, "If you have any influence tell them not to give up bringing them round, for they don't know how much good they may do." There have been many inquiries for my addresses on the subject of our views, in order to meet the cavils of those who charge us with unbelief. A

teacher of ours, Mr. W——, put some of our charity sermon hymns in the windows of his friends, and was sharply taken to task by a Puseyite Clergyman. "By what right do you dare," said he, "to spread poison in the way of my flock by exposing and disseminating such heretical papers?" "Why, sir, I have the same right to do it for mine as you have to do it for your's," was the answer. "Where were you brought up?" "At the Church of England." "How could you think then of joining the Unitarians?" "To save myself from becoming an infidel. I did not approve of the tyrannical conduct of the Church, and I could not believe her doctrines. I was a very different man when I first attended the Chapel in Lawrence Street to what I am now. It has saved me from infidelity." Few men have made greater progress in the Christian virtues than he has, often submitting to wrong uncomplainingly for the sake of Christ. This is a class of persons we wish to secure—they make good teachers, and have great power amongst their neighbours and friends.

The M———s, in P——— Street, gave me great pleasure at the close of last year, by their noble conduct to a poor homeless orphan girl. Though they are rag-gatherers, and very poor, yet they show great generosity of spirit, and are worthy of praise. T——— W——— had been turned out of her lodging very late at night through her inability to pay. She wandered about until half-past twelve o'clock, when she found herself by the canal side, and formed the resolution to commit suicide by drowning. Her dejected appearance and suspicious conduct attracted the attention of a man who happened to pass, and he was led to follow her. He came up just as she had laid aside her bonnet, and was about to plunge into the water. She was delivered up to a policeman, and finally transferred to the M———s, who have since continued to act as parents to her.

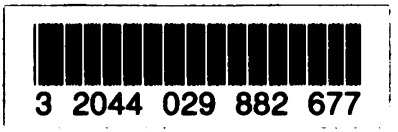
The Teachers' Benevolent Fund has equally prospered. It is supported by the voluntary contributions of the teachers, for relief during times of sickness. We have hitherto been able to

allow at the rate of two shillings per week. There is in hand £2. 16s. 3d. It is one of the most useful institutions we have, and tends to bind the teachers together in the bonds of Christian sympathy.

In conclusion, allow me to thank all those kind friends of the Mission, who have aided me so materially by gifts of various kinds, for distribution amongst the poor of my district. At the close of this year of exertion, I feel cheered and thankful for what has been accomplished, and hopeful and encouraged for the time to come. May the God of all grace be with us, and by making us a blessing to multitudes, crown our future labours with success.

J. G. BROOKS.

PRINTED BY W. GREW AND SON, HIGH-STREET, BIRMINGHAM.


3 2044 029 882 677